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GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY
30TH ANNIVERSARY 1962 1992
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
VALENTINO & MONTANO

The System Bytes™

Part 4

FEATURING:

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

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WHEREVER INNOCENT LIVES ARE THREATENED, THERE MUST GO...

...THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE!

THE GUARDIANS' STAR I REMOVED FROM THE CORPSE OF THE GRAND INQUISITOR * HAS ENABLED ME TO TRANSGRESS HYPER-SPACE...

...BUT, CAN EVEN MY HELLSPAWNED MIGHT ALLOW ME TO SURVIVE IT?!

* SEE ISSUE #14 FOR ALL THE DETAILS!-- CRAIG

TOM VALENTINO
SCRIPT
HERB TRIMPE
PENCILS
STEVE MONTANO
INKS
EVELYN STEIN
COLORS
KEN LOPEZ
LETTERS
CRAIG ANDERSON
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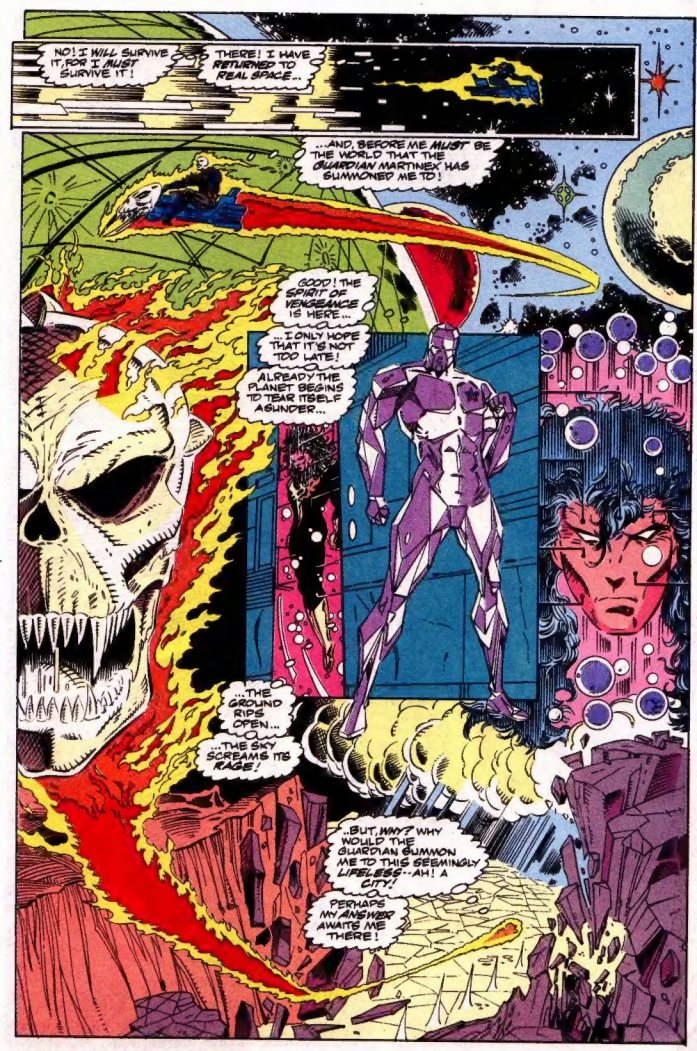
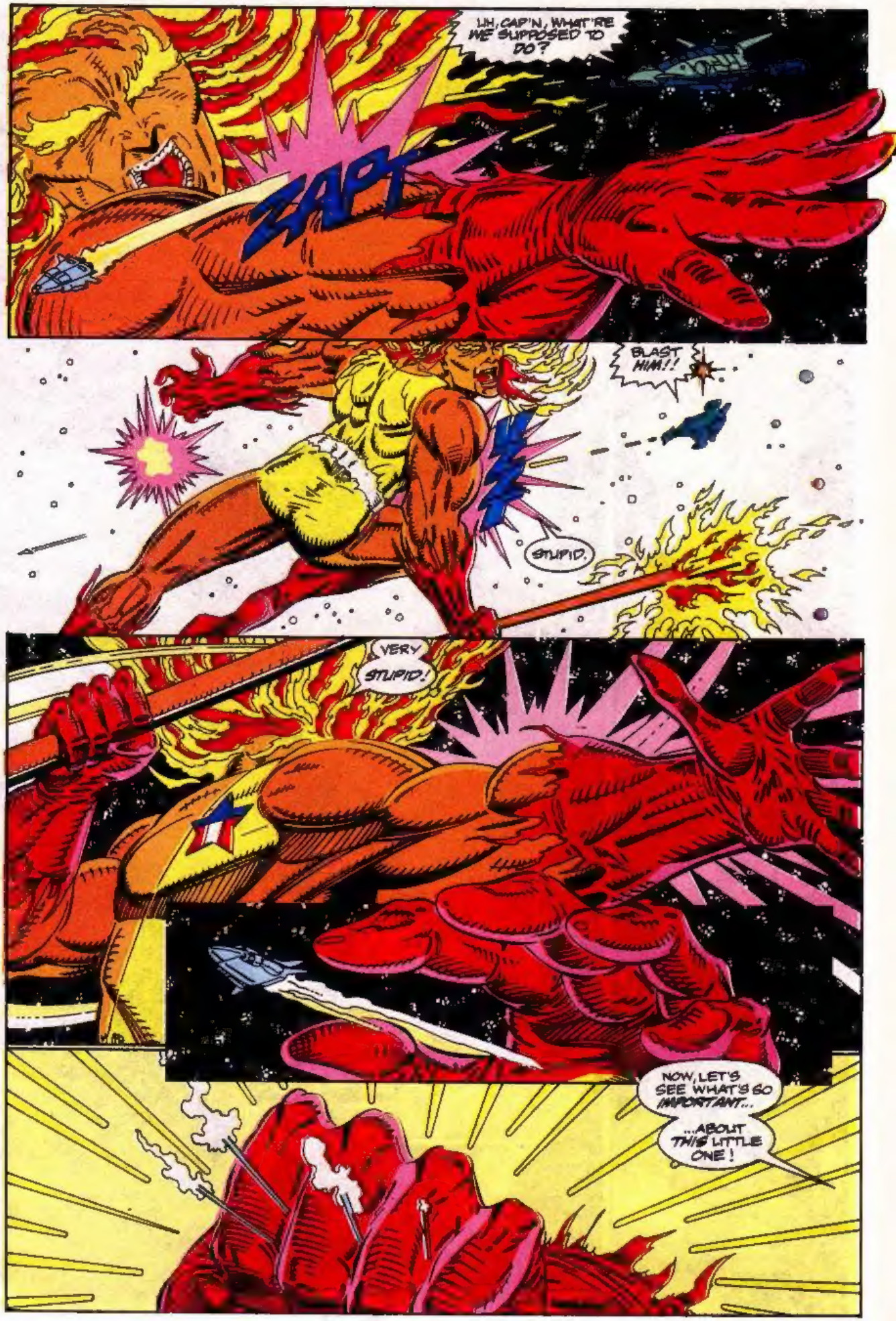
TOM PERALTA
EDITOR IN CHIEF

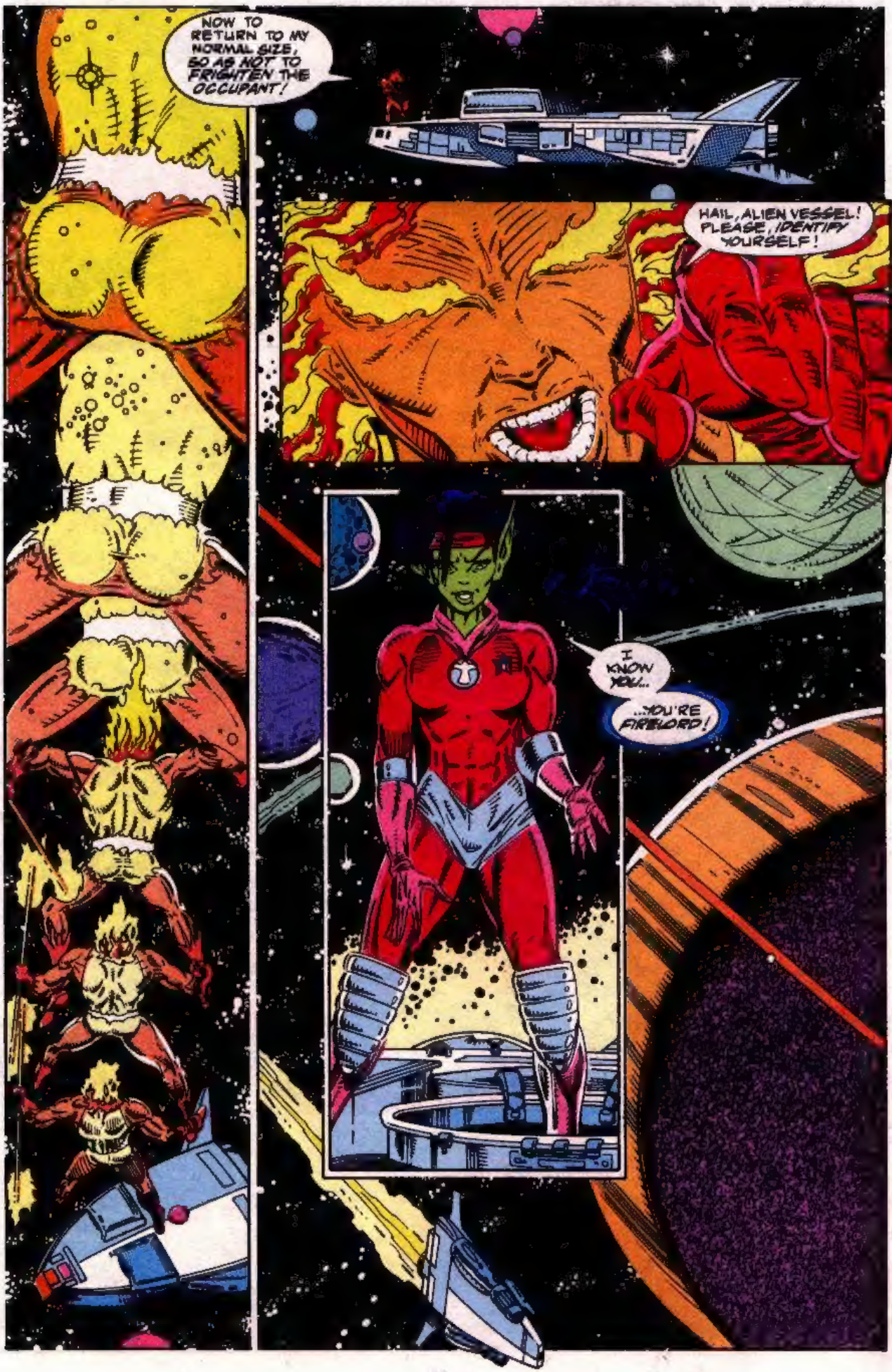

NO! I WILL SURVIVE IT, FOR I MUST SURVIVE IT!
THERE! I HAVE RETURNED TO REAL SPACE...
...AND, BEFORE ME MUST BE THE WORLD THAT THE GUARDIAN MARTINEX HAS SUMMONED ME TO!
GOOD! THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE IS HERE...
I ONLY HOPE THAT IT'S NOT TOO LATE!
ALREADY THE PLANET BEGINS TO TEAR ITSELF ASUNDER...
...THE GROUND RIPS OPEN...
...THE SKY SCREAMS ITS RAGE!
...BUT, WHY? WHY WOULD THE GUARDIAN SUMMON ME TO THIS SEEMINGLY LIFELESS--AH! A CITY!
PERHAPS MY ANSWER AWAITS ME THERE!

YES! IT IS AS THOUGH THE STAR WERE GUIDING ME...
...ALMOST LIKE A HOMING BEACON!*
AND, THERE HE IS! I MUST CIRCLE BACK AROUND.
HAIL, GUARDIAN! WE MUST QUIT THIS WORLD--IT IS DYING EVEN AS WE SPEAK!
IT'S NOT THE PLANET CAUSING ALL OF THIS DAMAGE, NILEADUG*...
...BUT THE COMPUTER THAT RUNS IT!
I FEAR THAT MAIN FRAME HAS GONE MAD!
*THE SPIRIT'S REAL NAME, CRAIGSTER
LET'S REJOIN SIMON, BACK AT MY OPERATIONS ROOM!*
* A HOMING BEACON IS BUT ONE OF THE INCREDIBLE PROPERTIES OF THE GUARDIANS' STARS. --FACT-FINDIN' CRAIG
*SIMON WILLIAMS, A.K.A. HOLLYWOOD, LEFT FOR MAIN FRAME'S WORLD IN ISSUE #23.--CRAIG

ELSEWHERE, IN THE DEPTHS OF...
...SPACE! HOW I LOVE THE FEEL OF ITS COLD EMBRACE UPON MY FLESH!
TO EVER ABANDON ITS FREEDOM WOULD BE TO ABANDON LIFE ITSELF FOR ONE SUCH AS I!
I PROMISED THE GUARDIANS THAT I WOULD JOURNEY TO MAIN FRAME'S WORLD TO TELL MARTINEX THAT...
...THEY WERE ALL RIGHT AFTER THEIR ENCOUNTER WITH GALACTUS.
AN ENCOUNTER THAT LEFT BOTH THE KEEPER AND ME AS THE PROTECTORS OF THE UNIVERSE!*
* IT HAPPENED IN THE ALREADY CLASSIC GUARDIANS #26!--FOOTNOTE-HAPPY CRAIG
ME TO LOOK AFTER THE NEEDS OF THE PLANET-DEVOURING GALACTUS...
...AND I TO FREELANCE THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE.

WHOA!
WHAT WAS THAT?!
ZOOM
A TINY, ONE-MAN VEHICLE, FLEEING AS THOUGH IT WAS BEING CHASED BY-- WHAT?!
A UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF TRUTH BATTLE CRUISER!?
FIRING ON THAT TINY SHUTTLE?!
I DON'T THINK SO!
I GUESS IT'S UP TO ME TO SHOW THEM...
...JUST WHAT A PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE CAN DO!!
HALT, CHURCH SHIP! YOU SHALL CEASE THIS PURSUIT!
SO SPEAKS THE PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE!

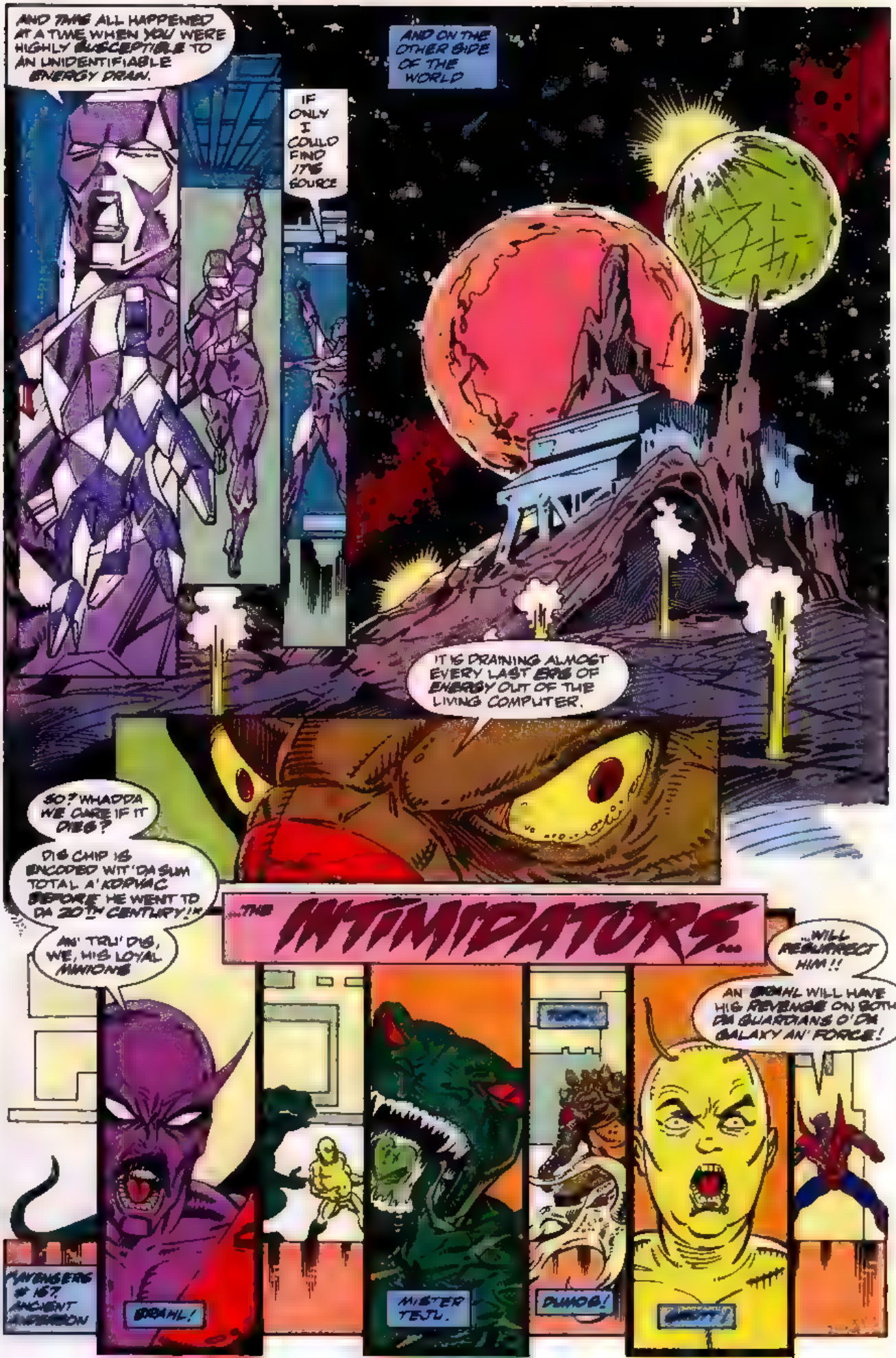

UH, CAP'N, WHAT'RE WE SUPPOSED TO DO?
ZAP!
BLAST HIM!!
STUPID.
VERY STUPID!
NOW, LET'S SEE WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT...
...ABOUT THIS LITTLE ONE!


NOW TO RETURN TO MY NORMAL SIZE, SO AS NOT TO FRIGHTEN THE OCCUPANT!
HAIL, ALIEN VESSEL! PLEASE, IDENTIFY YOURSELF!
I KNOW YOU..
...YOU'RE FIRELORD!

YES, CHILD. I AM THE PROTEC--
--YOU'RE A GUARDIAN OF THE GALAXY...
...JUST LIKE ME!
I ALMOST MET YOU ONCE.*
MY NAME'S REPLICA!
I'M ON MY WAY TO MAIN FRAME'S WORLD TO ANSWER A DISTRESS SIGNAL FROM MARTINEX!
YOU LIE, SKRULL! THERE IS NO GUARDIAN CALLED "REPLICA"...
BUT STILL, YOU DO POSSESS A STAR!
I SHALL TRAVEL WITH YOU, CHILD...
...AND, ALONG THE WAY I SHALL DISCOVER WHY A BATTLE CRUISER FROM THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF TRUTH WAS CHASING YOU...
...AND HOW IT IS YOU KNOW MARTINEX!
* FOR DETAILS SEE REPLICA'S FIRST EVER SOLO STORY IN THIS VERY ANNUAL!--C.A.

MAIN FRAME'S WORLD.
THE INTERFERENCE IS STILL TOO GREAT...
..I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO GET A HOLD OF THE GUARDIANS!
I HOPE THEY'RE ALL RIGHT.
"HOLLYWOOD AND THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE ARE DOING ALL THEY CAN TO HELP...
"...BUT, IF WE DON'T GET THIS UNDER CONTROL SOON...
"...IT'S NOT GOING TO BE ENOUGH!
MAIN FRAME CONTROLS EVERYTHING ON THE PLANET FROM THE CLIMATE TO INTERNAL STABILITY...
MAR--TIN--EK
MART
IN
X
MALFUNCTION MALFUN--GQUERRK
MAIN FRAME, I BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE CONTRACTED A COMPUTER VIRUS SOMEHOW.
AFFIRMATIVE.
THAT--IS--CON--FIRMED.
CAN YOU ELABORATE? TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT IT

* PUNISHER ANNUAL #5
** DAREDEVIL ANNUAL #8.
*** WONDER MAN ANNUAL #1.
--ANNUALIZED ANDERSON



AND THIS ALL HAPPENED AT A TIME WHEN YOU WERE HIGHLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO AN UNIDENTIFIABLE ENERGY DRAIN.

IF ONLY I COULD FIND IT'S SOURCE

AND ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD

IT IS DRAINING ALMOST EVERY LAST ERG OF ENERGY OUT OF THE LIVING COMPUTER.

SO? WHADDA WE CARE IF IT DIES?

DIS CHIP IS ENCODED WIT' DA SUM TOTAL A' KORVAC BEFORE HE WENT TO DA 20TH CENTURY!*

...THE INTIMIDATORS...

AN' TRU' DIS, WE, HIS LOYAL MINIONS

...WILL RESURRECT HIM!!

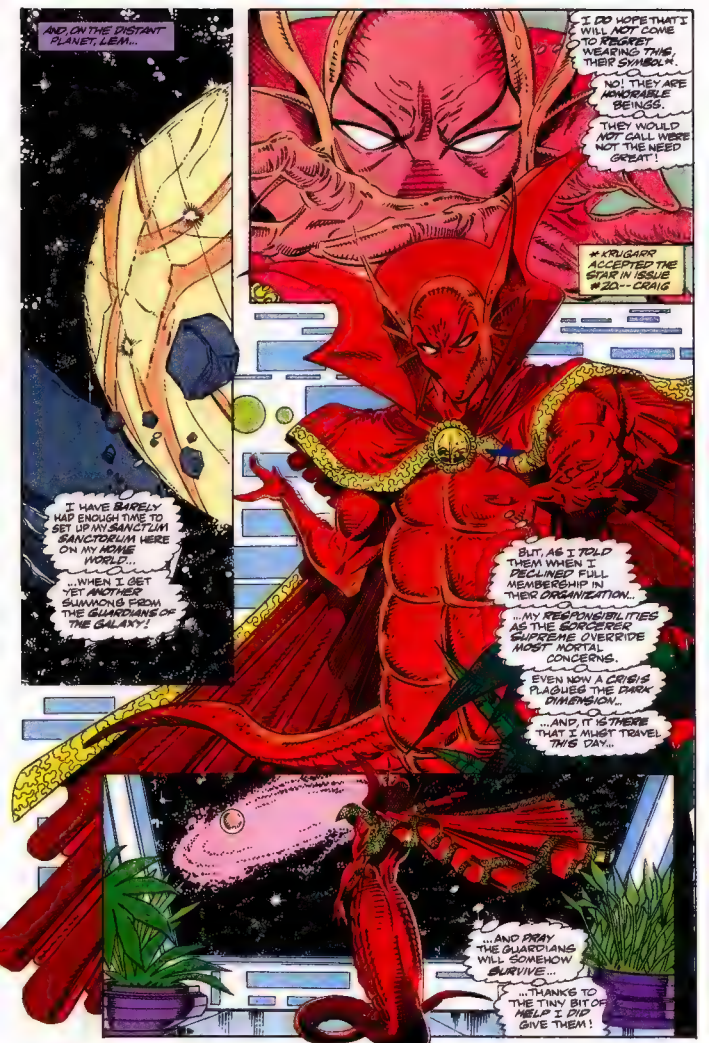
AN' BRAHL WILL HAVE HIS REVENGE ON BOTH DA GUARDIANS O' DA GALAXY AN' FORCE!

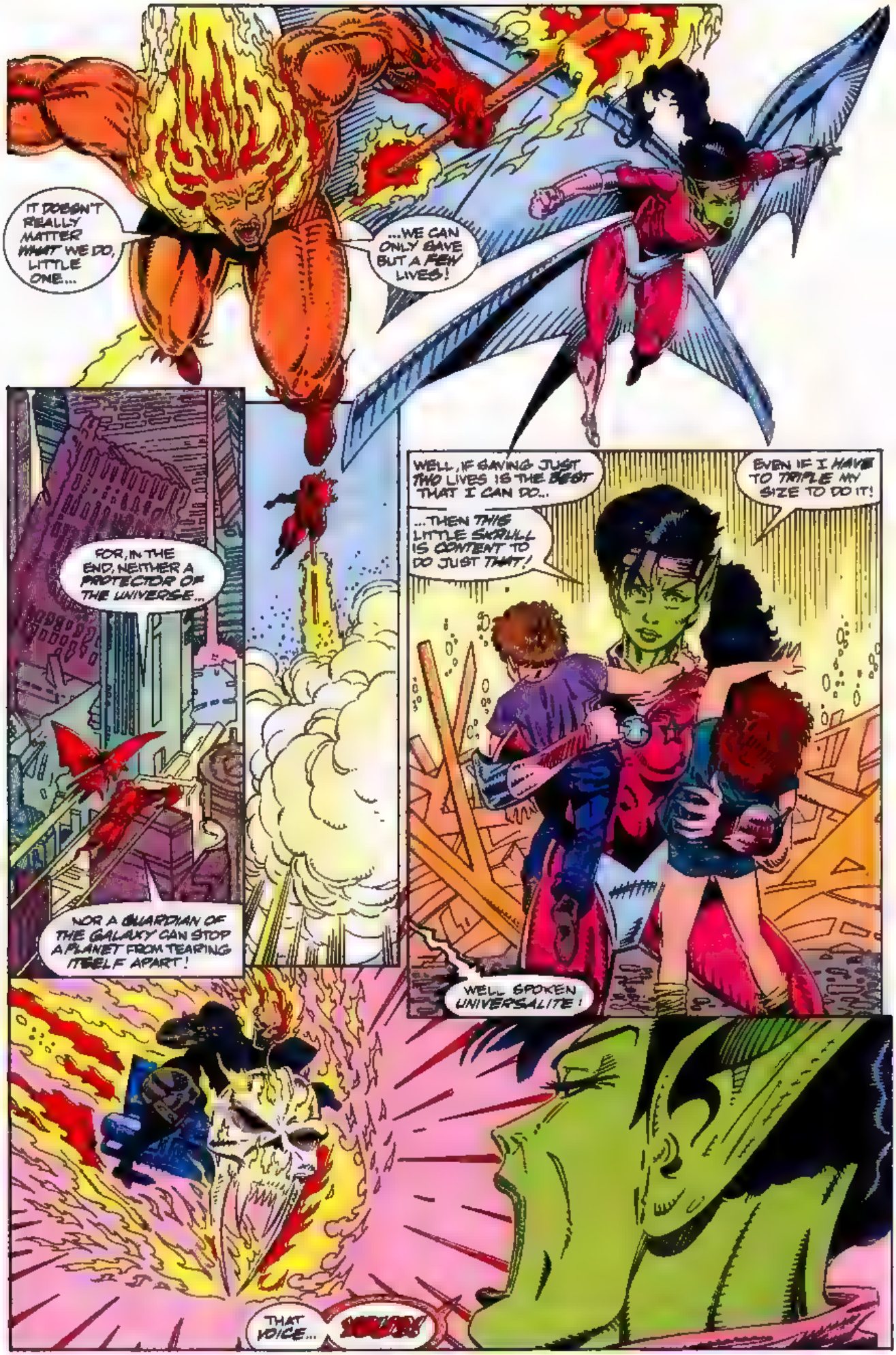
*AVENGERS # 167, ANCIENT ANDERSON

BRAHL!

MISTER TEJU.

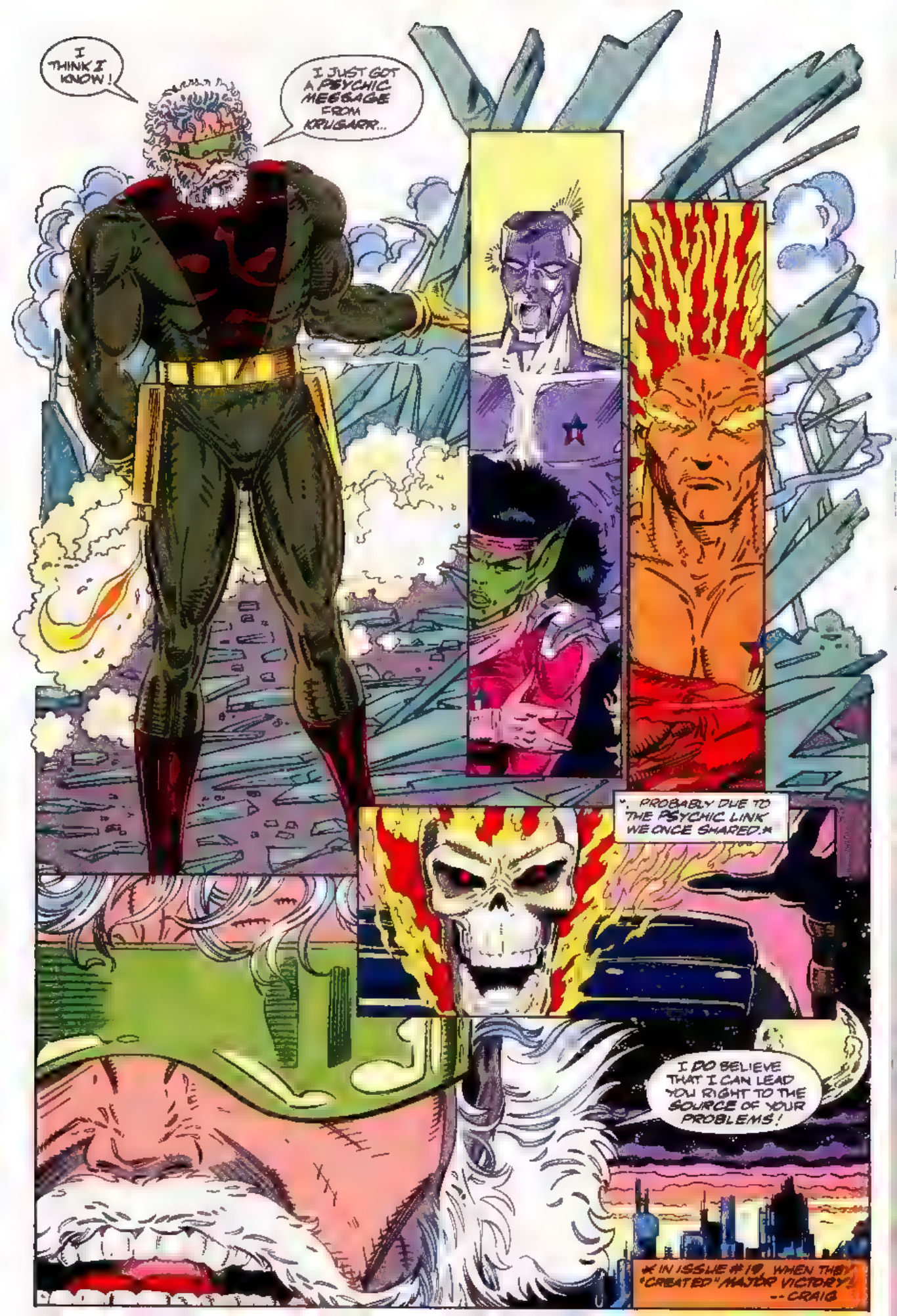
DUMOS!


AND, ON THE DISTANT PLANET, LEM...
I HAVE BARELY HAD ENOUGH TIME TO SET UP MY SANCTUM SANCTORUM HERE ON MY HOME WORLD...
...WHEN I GET YET ANOTHER SUMMONS FROM THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY!
I DO HOPE THAT I WILL NOT COME TO REGRET WEARING THIS, THEIR SYMBOL*.
NO! THEY ARE HONORABLE BEINGS.
THEY WOULD NOT CALL WERE NOT THE NEED GREAT!
* KRUGARR ACCEPTED THE STAR IN ISSUE #20-- CRAIG
BUT, AS I TOLD THEM WHEN I DECLINED FULL MEMBERSHIP IN THEIR ORGANIZATION...
...MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE SORCERER SUPREME OVERRIDE MOST MORTAL CONCERNS.
EVEN NOW A CRISIS PLAGUES THE DARK DIMENSION...
...AND, IT IS THERE THAT I MUST TRAVEL THIS DAY...
...AND PRAY THE GUARDIANS WILL SOMEHOW SURVIVE...
...THANKS TO THE TINY BIT OF HELP I DID GIVE THEM!

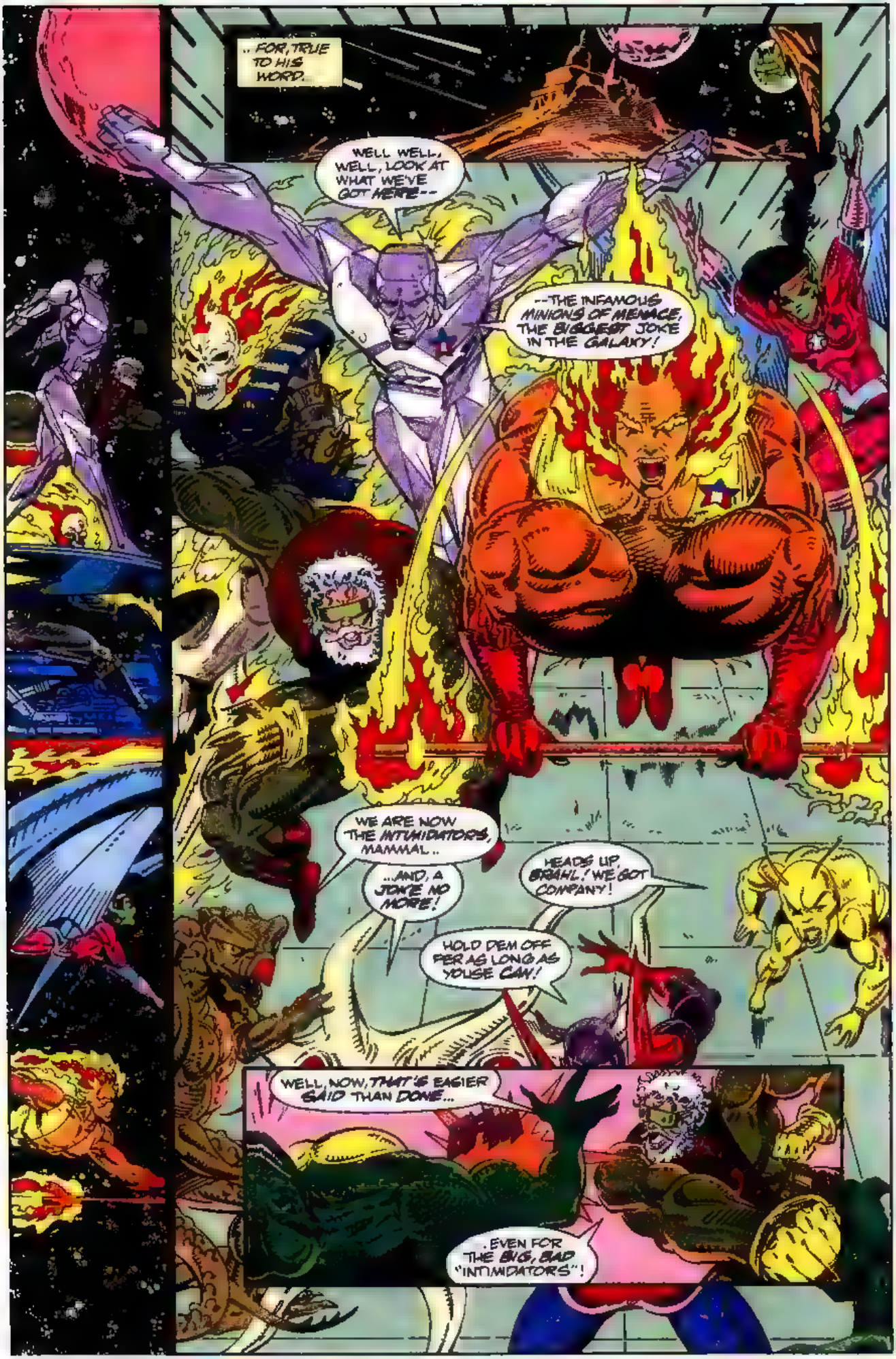

IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER WHAT WE DO, LITTLE ONE...
...WE CAN ONLY SAVE BUT A FEW LIVES!
FOR, IN THE END, NEITHER A PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE...
NOR A GUARDIAN OF THE GALAXY CAN STOP A PLANET FROM TEARING ITSELF APART!
WELL, IF SAVING JUST TWO LIVES IS THE BEST THAT I CAN DO...
...THEN THIS LITTLE SKRULL IS CONTENT TO DO JUST THAT!
EVEN IF I HAVE TO TRIPLE MY SIZE TO DO IT!
WELL SPOKEN UNIVERSALITE!
THAT VOICE...
XAVIER!

FIRELORD, HELP ME!
NO SKRULL! WAIT...
...YOU MISUNDERST--
IT'S A MONSTER!!
FOUL CREATURE!
SHE IS BUT A CHILD!
I DID NOT SEEK TO ATTACK HER, FOOL...
.. BUT, THE SAME WILL NOT BE SAID FOR YOU!
THEN, HAVE AT YOU, DEMON! YOU SHALL NOT FIND FIRELORD WANTING!
STOP!

I DID NOT SUMMON ALL OF YOU HERE TO FIGHT AMONG YOURSELVES--
--WE'RE ALL GUARDIANS HERE!
AND, SOON..
MARTY!
REPLICA! I DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU!
WHAT THE--?
RELAX, FIRELORD, WE'RE OLD FRIENDS!
NOW, LET ME EXPLAIN WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON AROUND HERE.
..SO NOW WE HAVE TO FIND OUT WHERE THE POWER DRAIN IS COMING FROM!
OH, MARTY! I MISSED YOU SO!

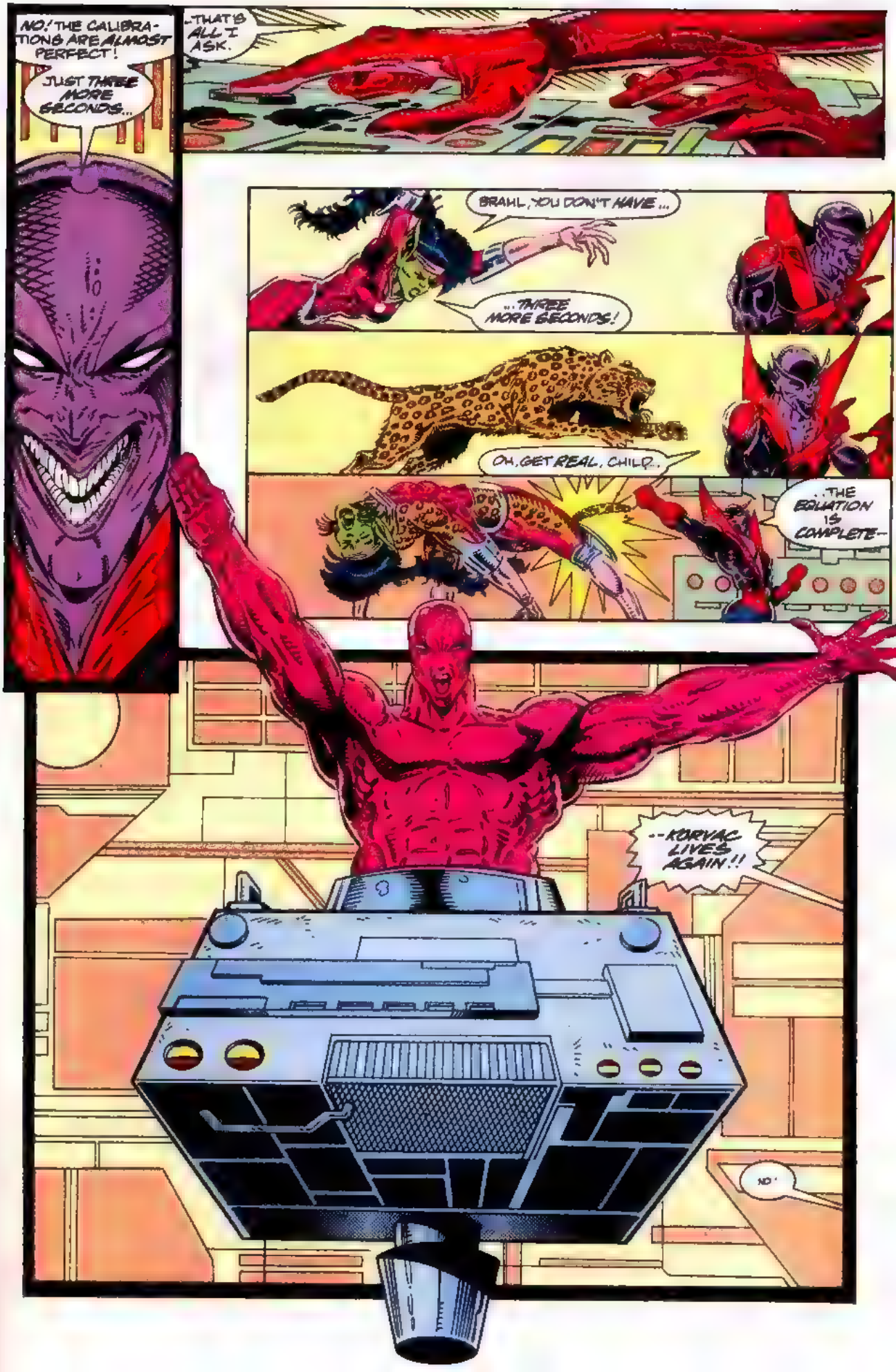

I THINK I KNOW!
I JUST GOT A PSYCHIC MESSAGE FROM KRUSARR...
...PROBABLY DUE TO THE PSYCHIC LINK WE ONCE SHARED.
I DO BELIEVE THAT I CAN LEAD YOU RIGHT TO THE SOURCE OF YOUR PROBLEMS!
*IN ISSUE #19, WHEN THEY "CREATED" MAJOR VICTORY!
--CRAIG

WHO IS HE, MARTY!?
HIS NAME IS SIMON WILLIAMS. CURRENT ALIAS IS HOLLYWOOD, BUT HE WAS ALSO KNOWN AS...
WONDER MAN.
WHY, YES. HAVE YOU HEARD OF HIM?
"HAVEN'T EVERYONE?"
BUT, MARTY, MUST LET THE YOUNGEST GUARDIAN'S CRYPTIC COMMENT ABOUT SIMON WILLIAMS' PAST GO UNQUESTIONED...


.. FOR, TRUE TO HIS WORD.
WELL WELL, WELL, LOOK AT WHAT WE'VE GOT *HERE*--
--THE INFAMOUS *MINIONS OF MENACE*, THE *BIGGEST* JOKE IN THE *GALAXY*!
WE ARE NOW THE *INTIMIDATORS*, MAMMAL..
..AND, A JOKE NO *MORE*!
HEADS UP, *BRAHL*! WE GOT COMPANY!
HOLD DEM OFF PER AS LONG AS YOUSE *CAN*!
WELL, NOW, *THAT'S* EASIER *SAID* THAN *DONE*...
..EVEN FOR THE *BIG, BAD* "INTIMIDATORS"!

YOU'LL BE LAUGHIN' OUTTA THE OTHER SIDE A YOUR FACE, PAL...
BIWHAP
WHEN YA GET A TASTE OF GROTT, THE MAN-SLAYER!
AND, THE INVINCIBLE TORK!
SALAP
GENTLEMEN...

...WE REMAIN...
...UNIMPRESSED!
POW
WELL, I GUESS THAT PRETTY MUCH PUTS THE MINIONS OF MENACE ON ICE!


NO! THE CALIBRATIONS ARE ALMOST PERFECT!
JUST THREE MORE SECONDS...
..THAT IS ALL I ASK.
BRAHL, YOU DON'T HAVE...
...THREE MORE SECONDS!
OH, GET REAL, CHILD..
..THE EQUATION IS COMPLETE--
--KORVAC LIVES AGAIN!!
NO!

IT'S UNBELIEVABLE! HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S MADE UP OF EQUAL PARTS OF KORVAC, MAIN FRAME, AND MICHAEL THE ENEMY!
AND ALL INSANE!.
OF COURSE, HE IS UNABLE TO MAINTAIN INTERNAL CONSISTENCY DUE TO THE FACT THAT--
WHAT ABOUT THE PHOENIX?
YAAAAGGHH
SO WHAT CAN WE DO?
BY CHARON! I'D FORGOTTEN! MAIN FRAME MAY NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD THE PHOENIX IN STATUS!
WE STOP KORVAC.
YES ANY WAY WE CAN!
IF WE DON'T, MAIN FRAME MAY BE ABSORBED COMPLETELY!

AND THEN, PERHAPS, THE PHOENIX WOULD BE FREED?
PERHAPS, YES. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU, BUT I'D RATHER NOT HAVE THAT ON MY CONSCIENCE!
ALL RIGHT, GUARDIANS-- ON MY MARK--
HIT HIM WITH EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT!
DO NOT GIVE HIM A SECOND TO BREATHE!
--ATTACK!

I SHALL TAKE EVERY OUNCE OF ENERGY YOU EXPEND...

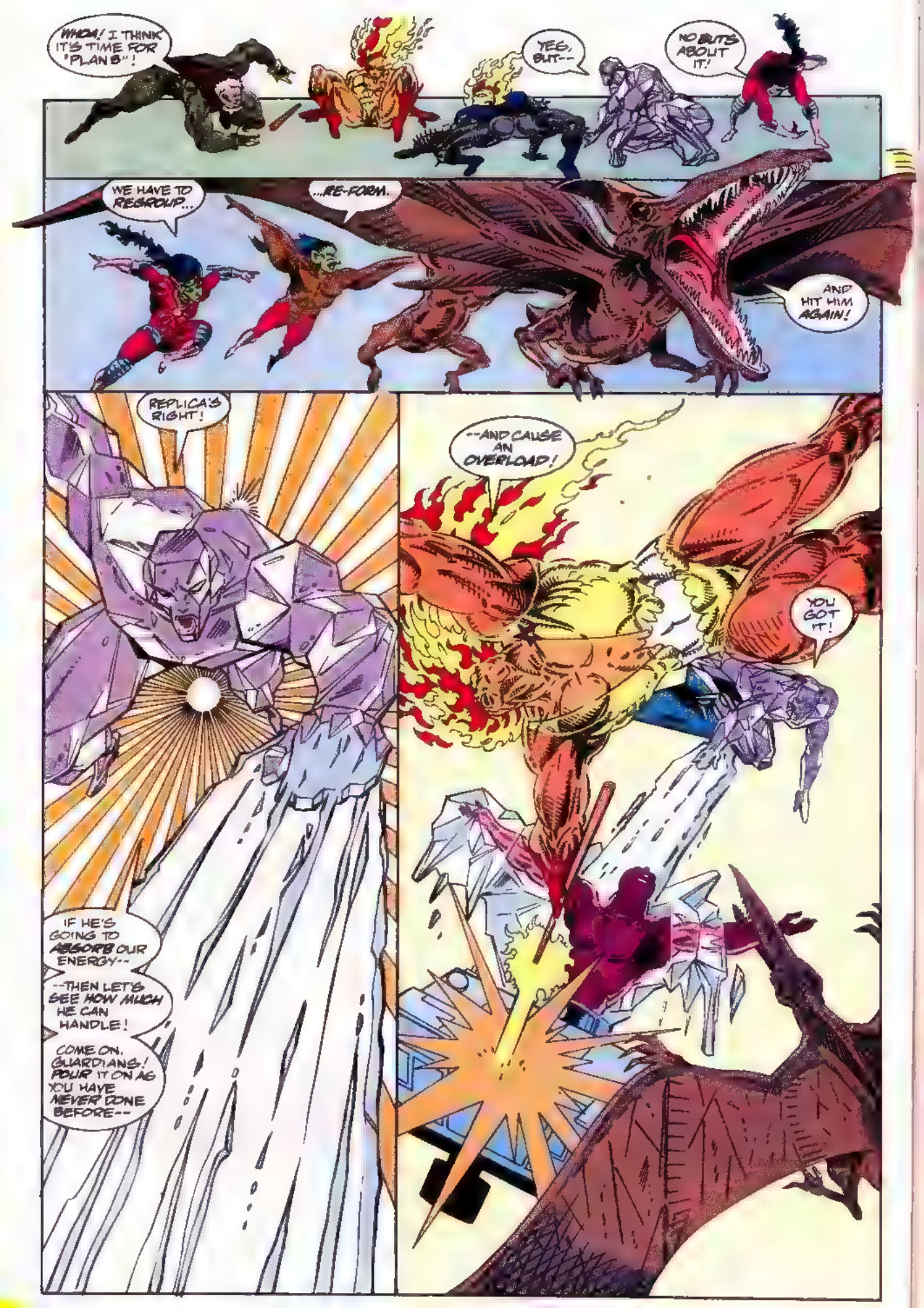
...EVERY ERG OF POWER YOU EXPEL...

...EVERY BLOW YOU PUMMEL ME WITH...

...AND I SHALL INTEGRATE IT INTO MY CIRCUITS...

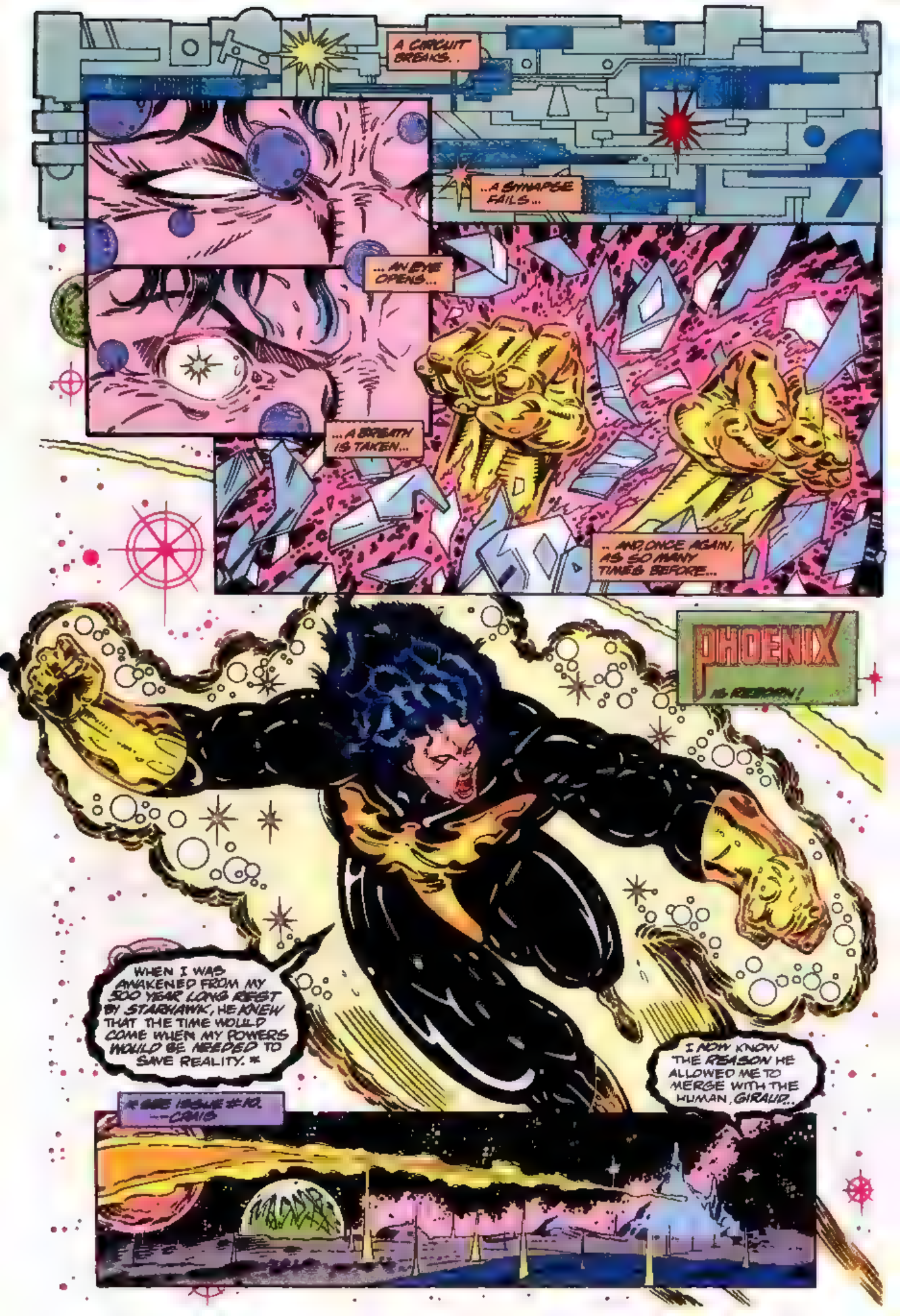
...AND, IT SHALL FUEL MY POWER CELLS ANEW...

...AND, I SHALL TURN THAT POWER BACK ON YOU!

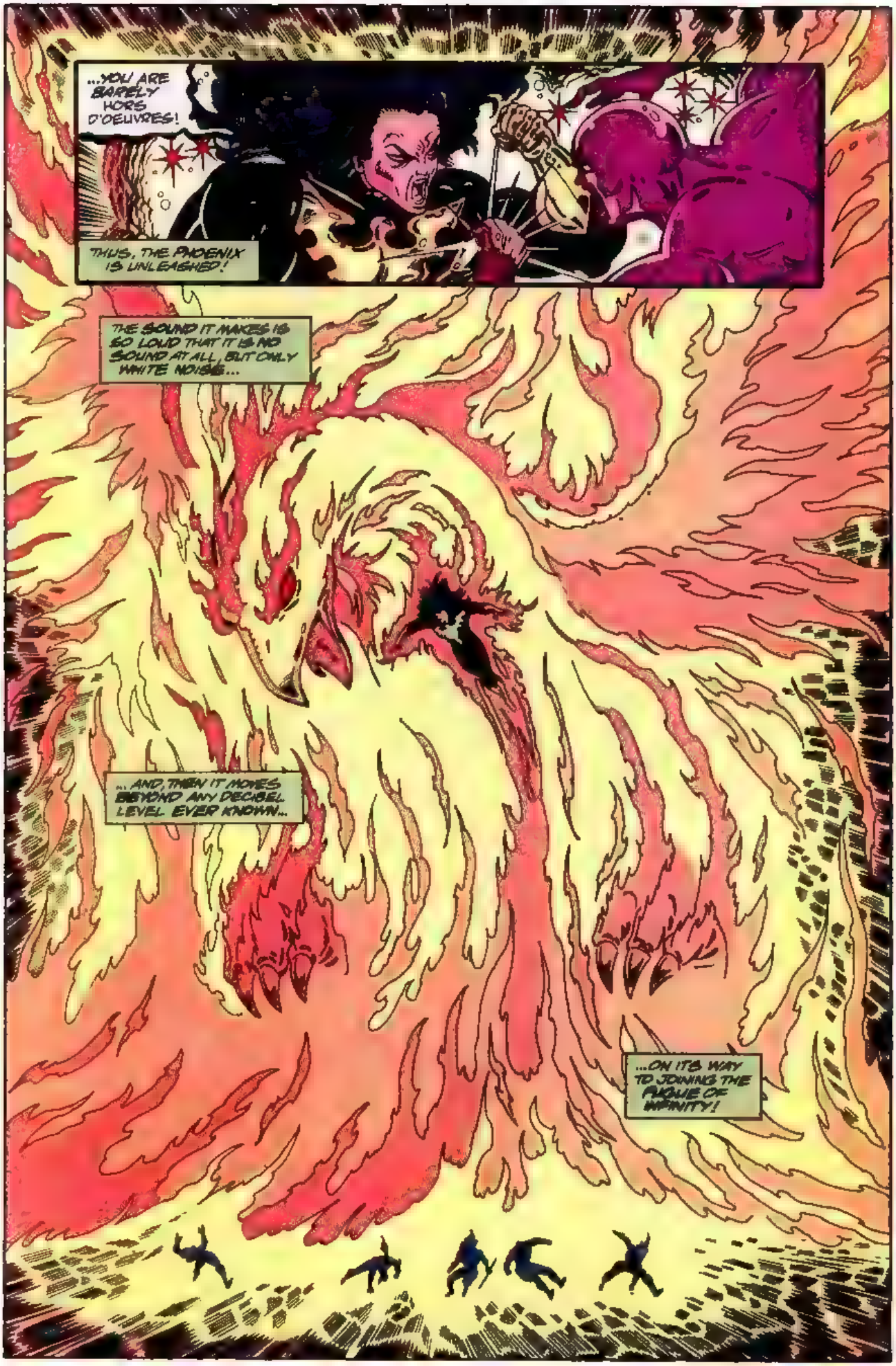

WHOA! I THINK IT'S TIME FOR "PLAN B"!
YEG, BUT--
NO BUTS ABOUT IT!
WE HAVE TO REGROUP...
...RE-FORM.
AND HIT HIM AGAIN!
REPLICA'S RIGHT!
--AND CAUSE AN OVERLOAD!
YOU GOT IT!
IF HE'S GOING TO ABSORB OUR ENERGY--
--THEN LET'S SEE HOW MUCH HE CAN HANDLE!
COME ON, GUARDIANS! POUR IT ON AS YOU HAVE NEVER DONE BEFORE--

NOOOO!
YOUR SCREAMS WILL AVAIL YOU NAUGHT, INSANE ONE!
YOU--!
GET--
--OFF--
--ME!
HEY, KORVEY! HOW'S THIS--
--FOR AN OVERLOAD?!
YOU FOOL! I LL-- YAAAGH!
CRASH

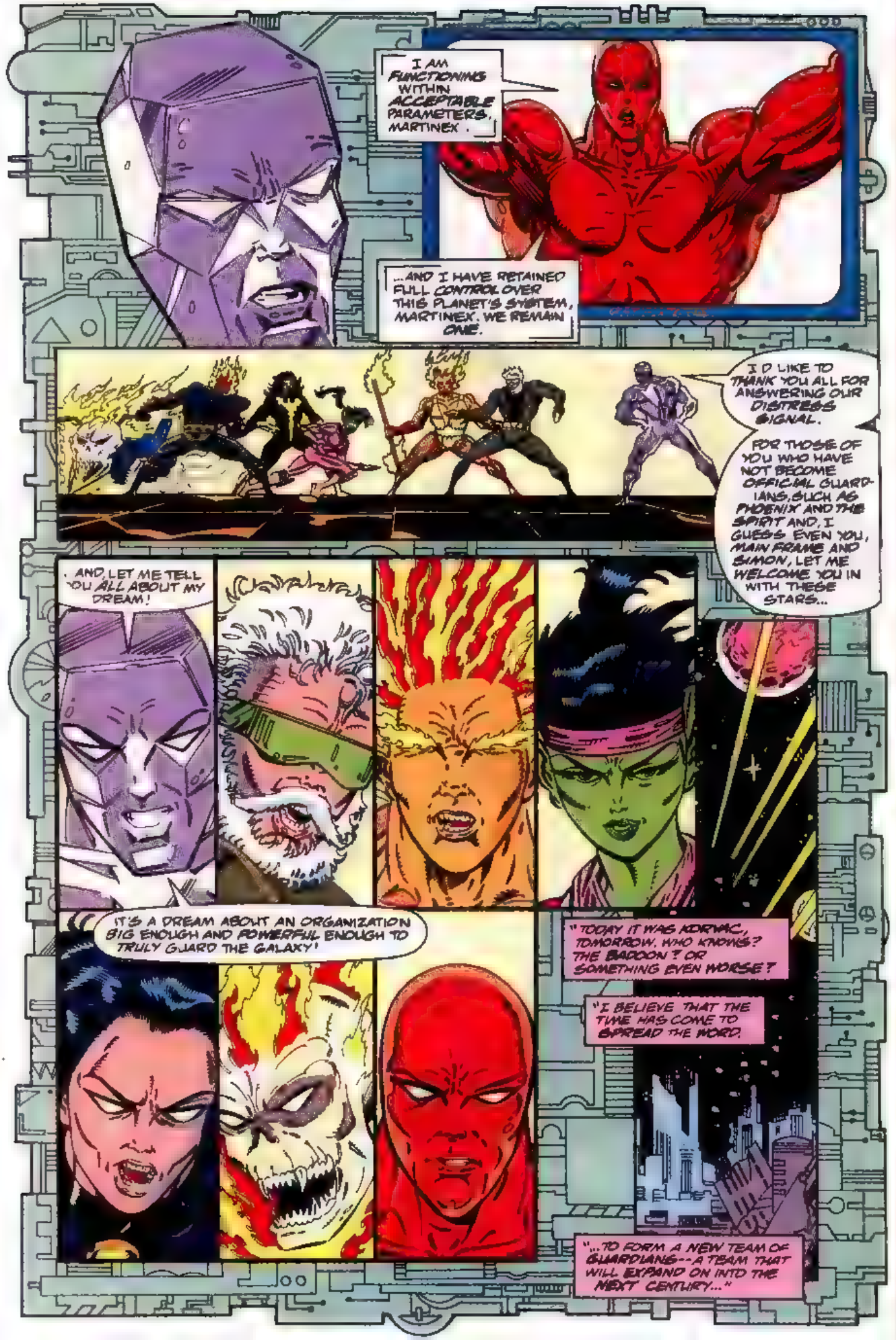
HEG DOWN, GUYS!
LET HIM HAVE IT!
ONE-BONE-CRUSHING BLOW, COMING UP!
MUST CONCENTRATE-- WHOOOSH!
POW
YOUR DOOM IS UPON YOU!
NO!
MUST DESTROY--
MUST-- KILL--
AND, IN HIS ANGER, THE CYBORG'S TENUOUS GRASP OF REALITY--
--SNAPS!
AAARGH!


A CIRCUIT BREAKS...
...A SYNAPSE FAILS...
...AN EYE OPENS...
...A BREATH IS TAKEN...
...AND ONCE AGAIN, AS SO MANY TIMES BEFORE...
PHOENIX
IS REBORN!
WHEN I WAS AWAKENED FROM MY 500 YEAR LONG REST BY STARHAWK, HE KNEW THAT THE TIME WOULD COME WHEN MY POWERS WOULD BE NEEDED TO SAVE REALITY. *
I NOW KNOW THE REASON HE ALLOWED ME TO MERGE WITH THE HUMAN, GIRAUD...
* SEE ISSUE #10. --CHRIS
MADRIA

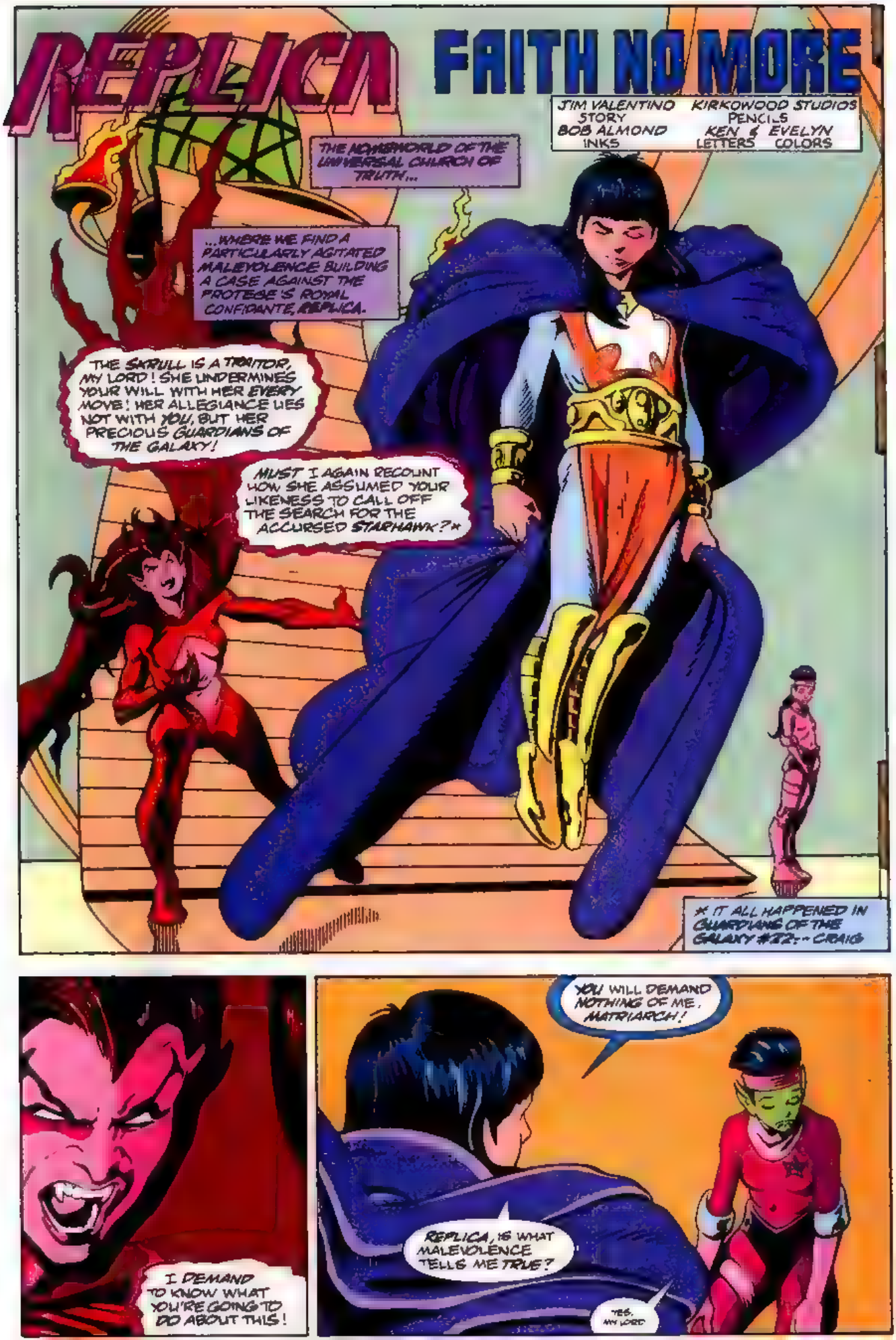
...AND, THAT REASON IS YOU, KORVAC!
THE PHOENIX!?!
MY DESTINY IS TO DESTROY YOU!
YOU FOOL! YOU COULD NEVER DESTROY ME--
--I AM KORVAC!!
TO ONE WHO HAS CONSUMED STARS


...YOU ARE BARELY HORS D'OEUVRES!
THUS, THE PHOENIX IS UNLEASHED!
THE SOUND IT MAKES IS SO LOUD THAT IT IS NO SOUND AT ALL, BUT ONLY WHITE NOISE...
...AND, THEN IT MOVES BEYOND ANY DECIBEL LEVEL EVER KNOWN...
...ON ITS WAY TO JOINING THE AGGIE OF INFINITY!

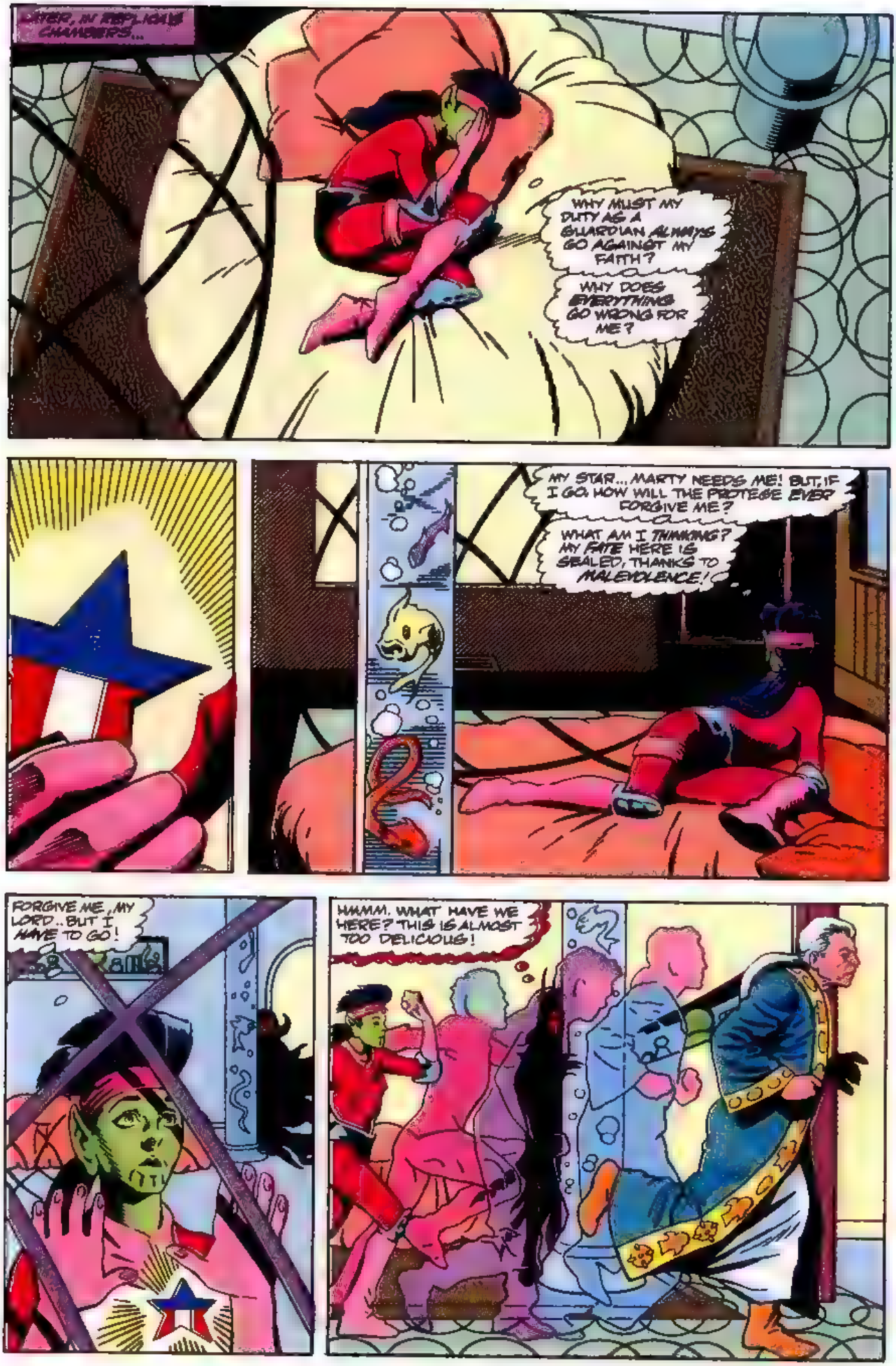
AND, WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARED..
...NONE REMAINED STANDING..
I REMOVED KORVAC FROM THIS REALITY...
..AND TRANSPORTED HIM TO ANOTHER!
AND SPIRIT, MY HUNGER SATIATED--
--FOR NOW!
MAIN FRAME? ARE YOU IN THERE?
PHOENIX! I THOUGHT YOU--
DID YOU DESTROY THE CYBORG, THEN?
AND, WHAT OF THE THREAT OF THE PHOENIX?

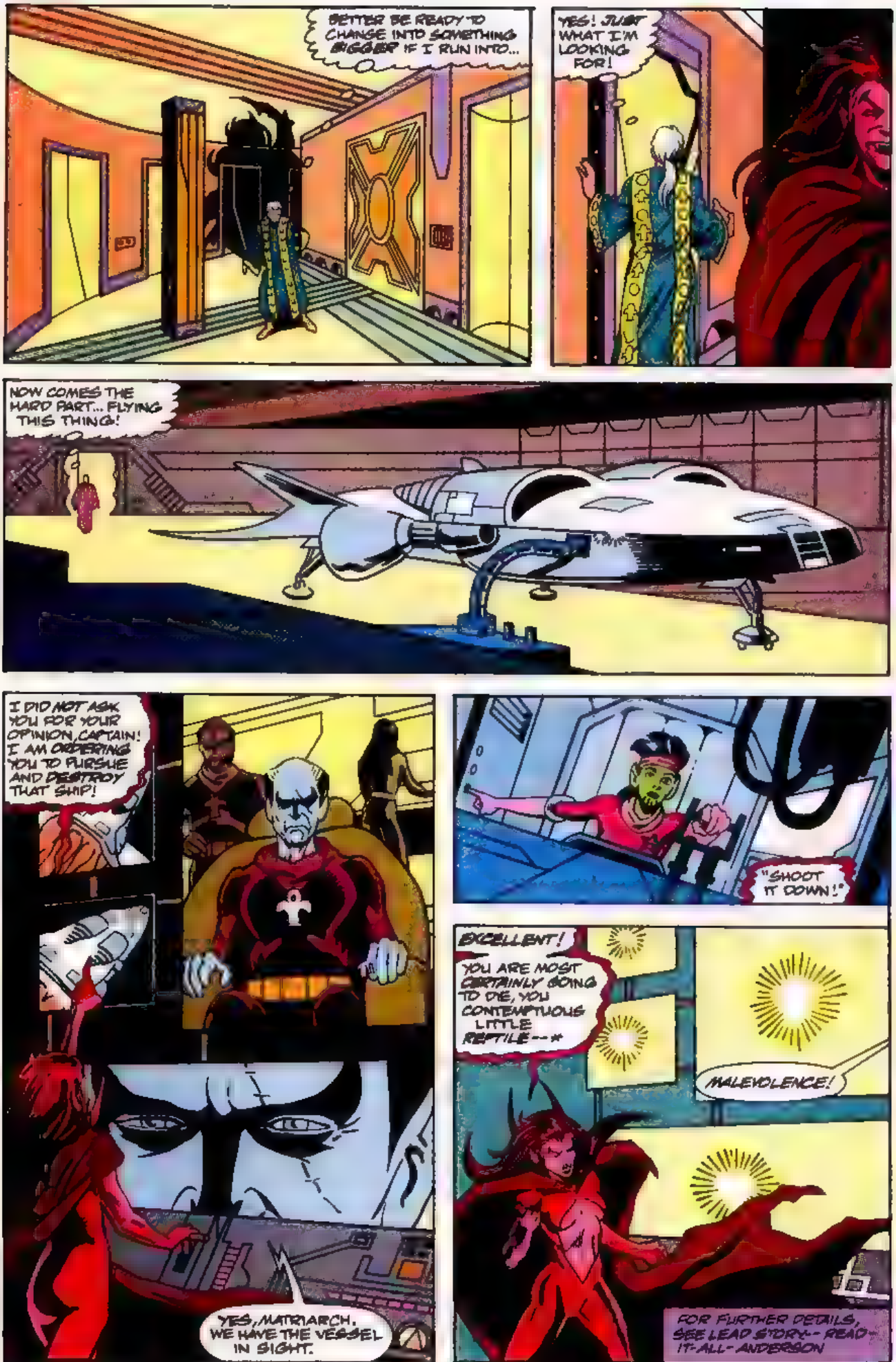

I AM FUNCTIONING WITHIN ACCEPTABLE PARAMETERS, MARTINEX.
...AND I HAVE RETAINED FULL CONTROL OVER THIS PLANET'S SYSTEM, MARTINEX. WE REMAIN ONE.
I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU ALL FOR ANSWERING OUR DISTRESS SIGNAL.
FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE NOT BECOME OFFICIAL GUARDIANS, SUCH AS PHOENIX AND THE SPIRIT AND, I GUESS EVEN YOU, MAIN FRAME AND SIMON, LET ME WELCOME YOU IN WITH THESE STARS...
...AND LET ME TELL YOU ALL ABOUT MY DREAM!
IT'S A DREAM ABOUT AN ORGANIZATION BIG ENOUGH AND POWERFUL ENOUGH TO TRULY GUARD THE GALAXY!
"TODAY IT WAS KORVAC, TOMORROW, WHO KNOWS? THE BADOON? OR SOMETHING EVEN WORSE?
"I BELIEVE THAT THE TIME HAS COME TO SPREAD THE WORD.
"...TO FORM A NEW TEAM OF GUARDIANS--A TEAM THAT WILL EXPAND ON INTO THE NEXT CENTURY..."

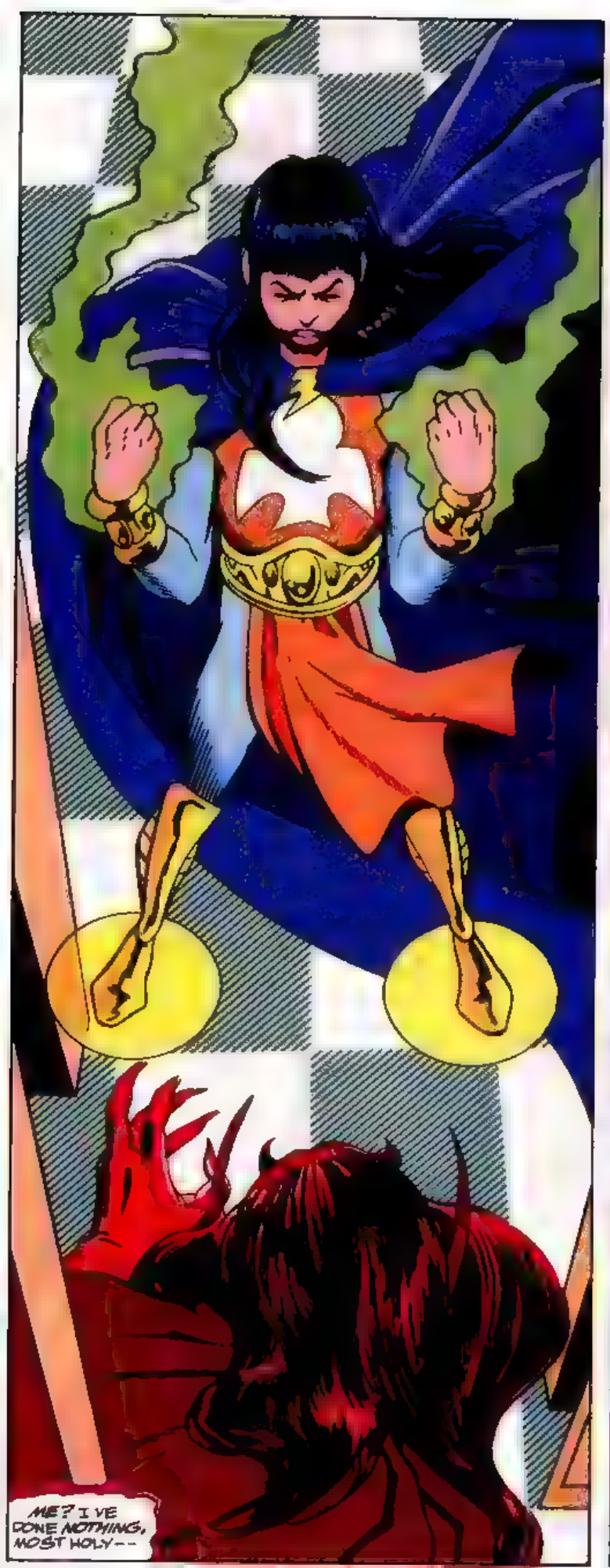
A TEAM OF
GALACTIC GUARDIANS!
AND FOR THEM THIS IS ONLY...
THE BEGINNING!
THE END


REPLICA
FAITH NO MORE
JIM VALENTINO STORY
BOB ALMOND INKS
KIRKWOOD STUDIOS PENCILS
KEN & EVELYN LETTERS COLORS
THE ADMINISTRATIVE WORLD OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF TRUTH...
...WHERE WE FIND A PARTICULARLY AGITATED MALEVOLENCE BUILDING A CASE AGAINST THE PROTEGE'S ROYAL CONFIDANTE, REPLICA.
THE SKRULL IS A TRAITOR, MY LORD! SHE UNDERMINES YOUR WILL WITH HER EVERY MOVE! HER ALLEGIANCE LIES NOT WITH YOU, BUT HER PRECIOUS GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY!
MUST I AGAIN RECOUNT HOW SHE ASSUMED YOUR LIKENESS TO CALL OFF THE SEARCH FOR THE ACCURSED STARHAWK?*
* IT ALL HAPPENED IN GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #22. -- CRAIG
I DEMAND TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS!
YOU WILL DEMAND NOTHING OF ME, MATRIARCH!
REPLICA, IS WHAT MALEVOLENCE TELLS ME TRUE?
YES, MY LORD

"YES, MY LORD?" IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?!
IS THAT THE BEST YOU CAN DO?!!
GET OUT OF HERE... NOW!
DON'T LET HER GO, PROTEGE! LET ME STRIKE HER NOW!
SHUT UP, MALEVOLENCE!
BUT, MY LORD...
I SAID SHUT UP!
LEAVE ME ALONE, MATRIARCH I WANT TO BE BY MYSELF!
SHE CAN'T BE TRUSTED, MOST HOLY! SHE MUST BE PUNISHED NOW FOR HER SKRULLIAN TREACHERY!

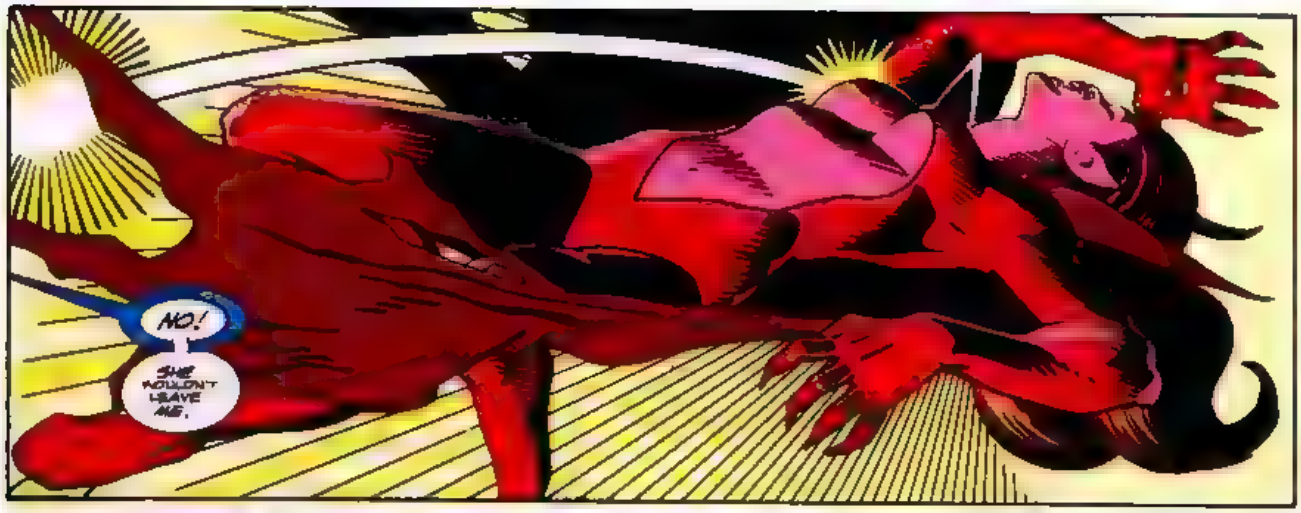

LATER, IN REPLICA'S CHAMBERS...
WHY MUST MY DUTY AS A GUARDIAN ALWAYS GO AGAINST MY FAITH?
WHY DOES EVERYTHING GO WRONG FOR ME?
MY STAR... MARTY NEEDS ME! BUT, IF I GO, HOW WILL THE PROTEGE EVER FORGIVE ME?
WHAT AM I THINKING? MY FATE HERE IS SEALED, THANKS TO MALEVOLENCE!
FORGIVE ME, MY LORD.. BUT I HAVE TO GO!
HMMM. WHAT HAVE WE HERE? THIS IS ALMOST TOO DELICIOUS!

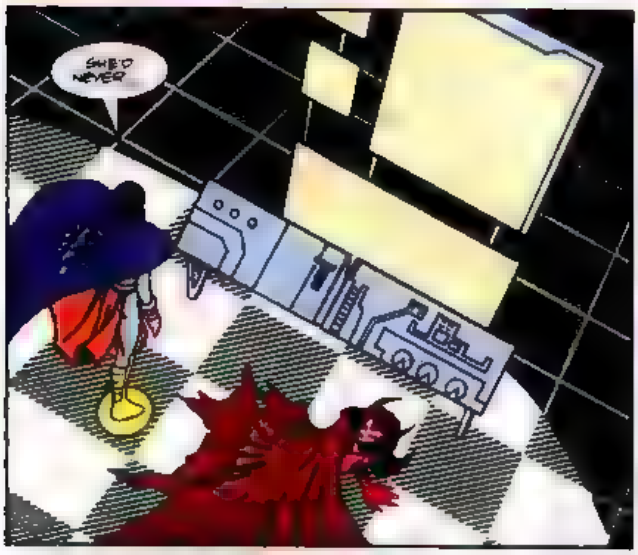

BETTER BE READY TO CHANGE INTO SOMETHING BIGGER IF I RUN INTO...
YES! JUST WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR!
NOW COMES THE HARD PART... FLYING THIS THING!
I DID NOT ASK YOU FOR YOUR OPINION, CAPTAIN! I AM ORDERING YOU TO PURSUE AND DESTROY THAT SHIP!
YES, MATRIARCH. WE HAVE THE VESSEL IN SIGHT.
"SHOOT IT DOWN!"
EXCELLENT!
YOU ARE MOST CERTAINLY GOING TO DIE, YOU CONTEMPTUOUS LITTLE REPTILE--*
MALEVOLENCE!
FOR FURTHER DETAILS, SEE LEAD STORY-- READ IT-ALL-ANDERSON

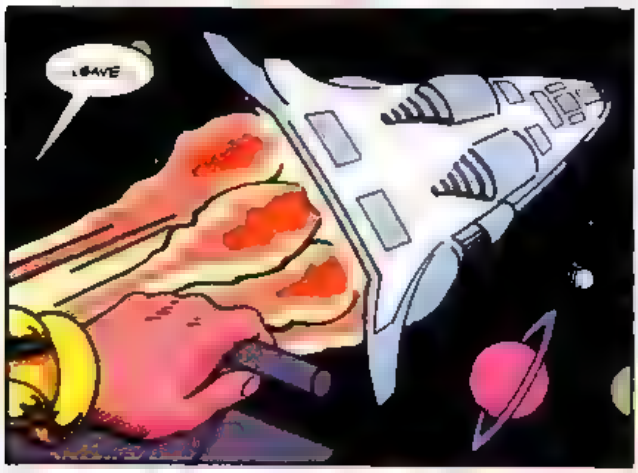

ME? I'VE DONE NOTHING, MOST HOLY--

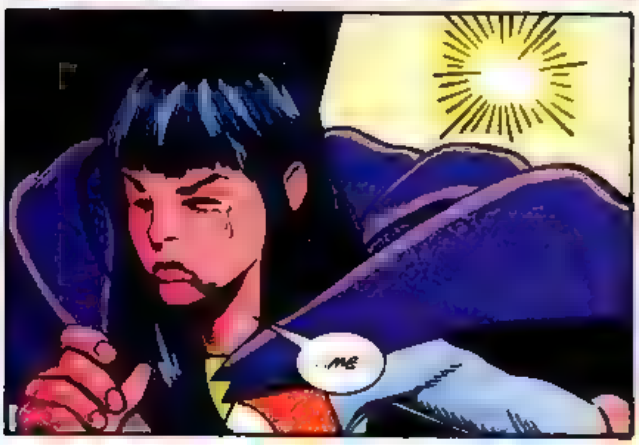
--IT IS SHE WHO HAS RUN AWAY FROM YOU.

PERHAPS SHE FEELS GUILTY...
FOR HER BETRAYAL OF YOU.


NO!
SHE WOULDN'T LEAVE ME.


SHE'D NEVER


LEAVE


ME

CALL THE BATTLE CRUISER BACK, MALEVOLENCE...
LET HER GO.
THE END

HEY, GANG! HERE'S AN ALTERNATE COVER FOR OUR LEGENDARY 25TH ISSUE!
25
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

VALENTINO/KUPPERBERG
THE ORIGINAL
GUARDIANS
OF THE GALAXY

THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY HAD COME TO THE ALPHA CENTAURI STAR SYSTEM TO AID THE KEEPER AGAINST THE MENACE OF GALACTUS. BUT UPON ARRIVING, THEY DISCOVERED THAT YONDU'S PLANET, CENTAURI IV, LONG THOUGHT A VICTIM OF GENOCIDE, WAS, IN FACT, STILL INHABITED! * YONDU WENT ON AHEAD SEVERAL HOURS AGO, AND THE GROUP IS JUST CATCHING UP TO HIM. AND, ONLY NOW, DO THEY REALIZE THAT THIS WILL BE ..

A TIME FOR FAREWELLS

JIM VALENTINO
SCRIPT
MATTHEW JORGENSEN
PENCILS
ANDREW PEPOY
INKS
KEN LOPEZ
LETTERS
EVELYN STEIN
COLORS
CRAIG ANDERSON
EDITS

DON'T MAKE ANY SUDDEN MOVES, TROOP. YONDU'S PEOPLE SPOOK EASILY.

YOU'RE A LITTLE TOO LATE WITH THE WARNING, VANCE.

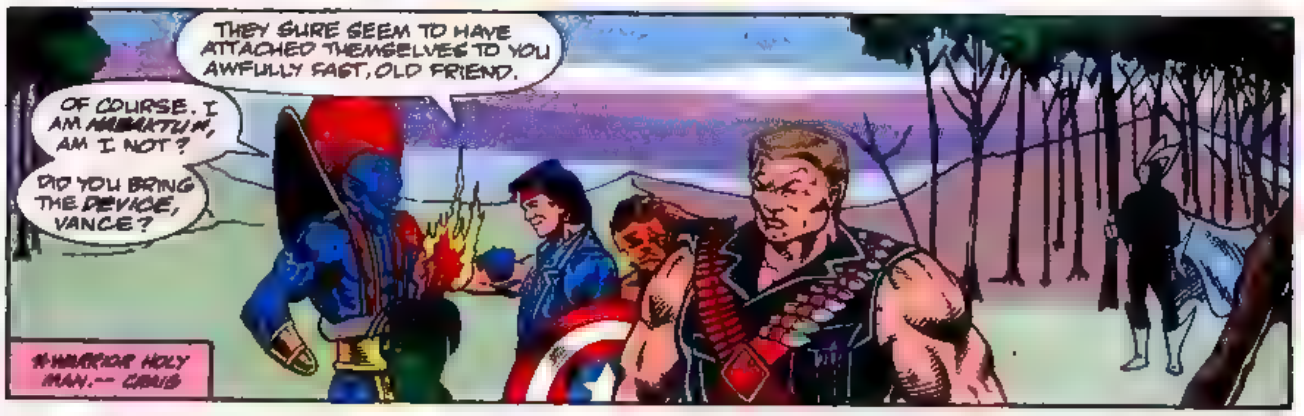
I'LL SAY LOOK AT 'EM RUN!

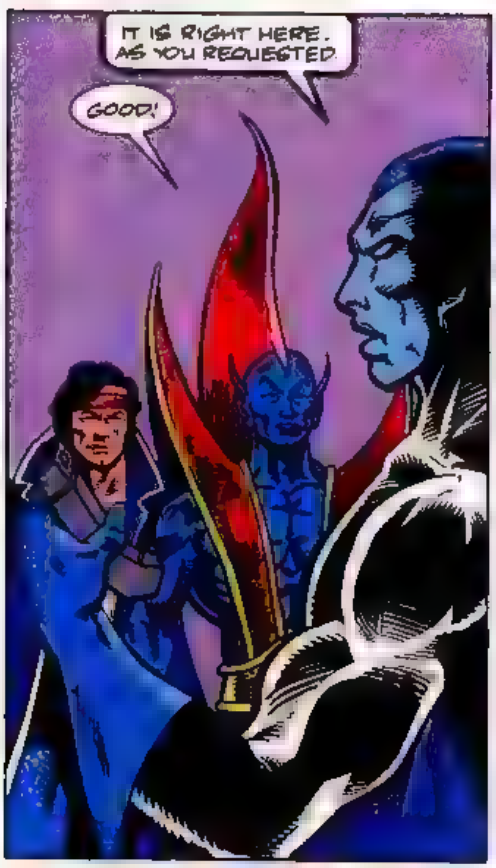
WELL I GUESS YOU COULD SAY WE CAUSE QUITE A COMMOTION WHEREVER WE GO!

I SHOULD SAY YOU DO, TALON...

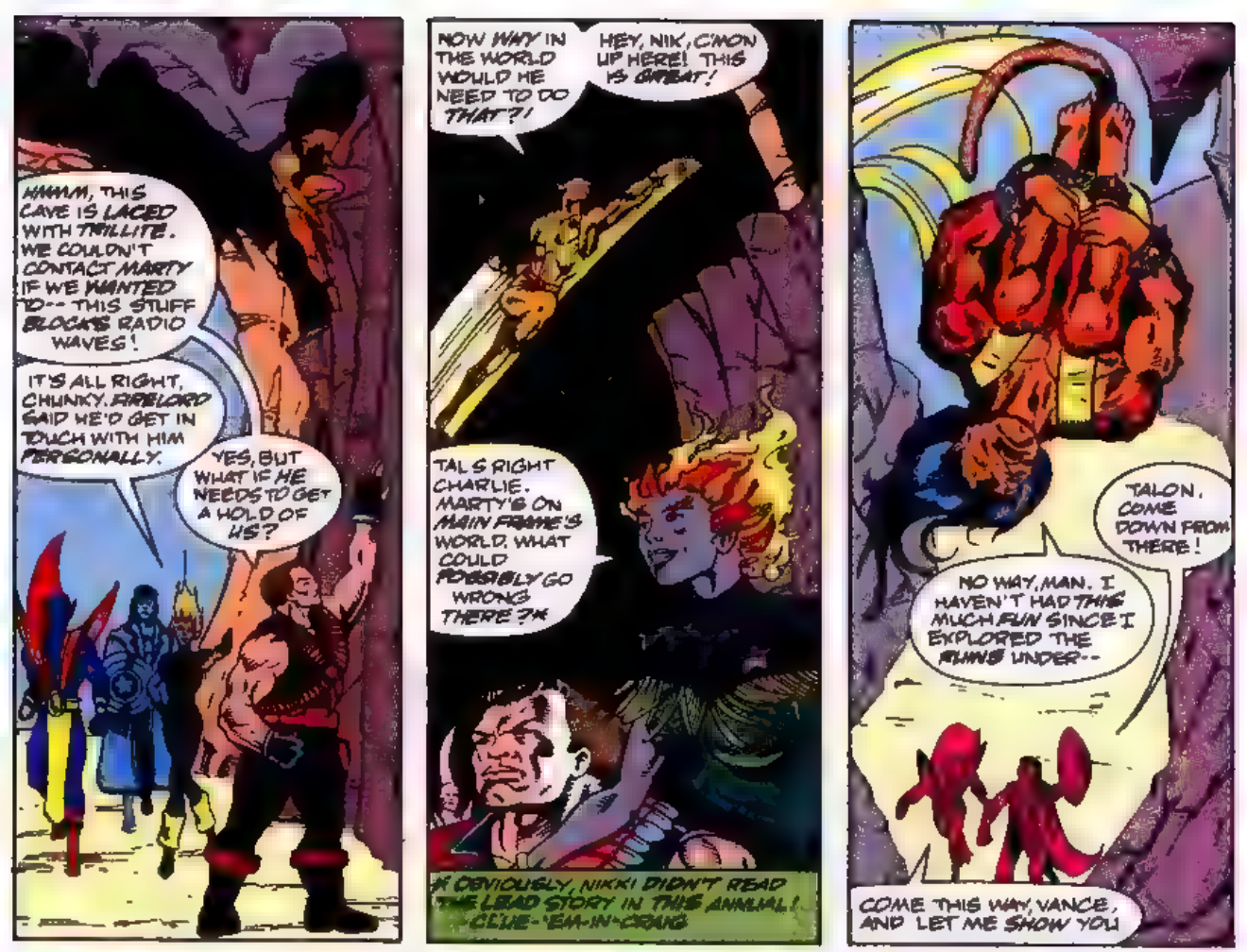
* IT ALL HAPPENED IN GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #25.--CRAIG

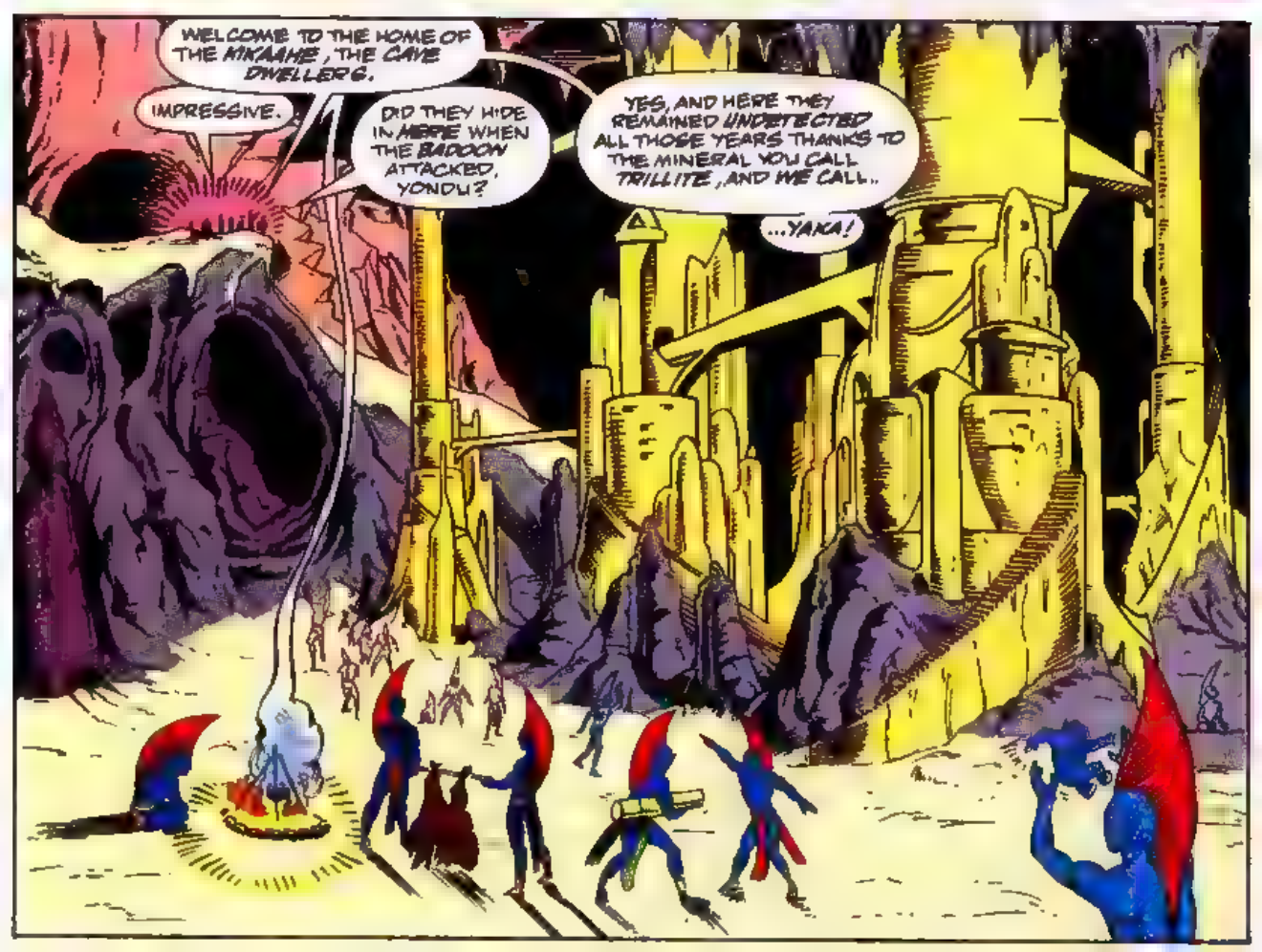
...AFTER ALL, IT IS NOT EVERY DAY THAT THEY SEE A MAN COVERED IN FUR!
WELCOME, MY FRIENDS, TO THE LAST TRIBE OF ANTHOS!


THEY SURE SEEM TO HAVE ATTACHED THEMSELVES TO YOU AWFULLY FAST, OLD FRIEND.
OF COURSE. I AM AMBARTUM, AM I NOT?
DID YOU BRING THE DEVICE, VANCE?
*WARRIOR HOLY MAN.-- CRUIS

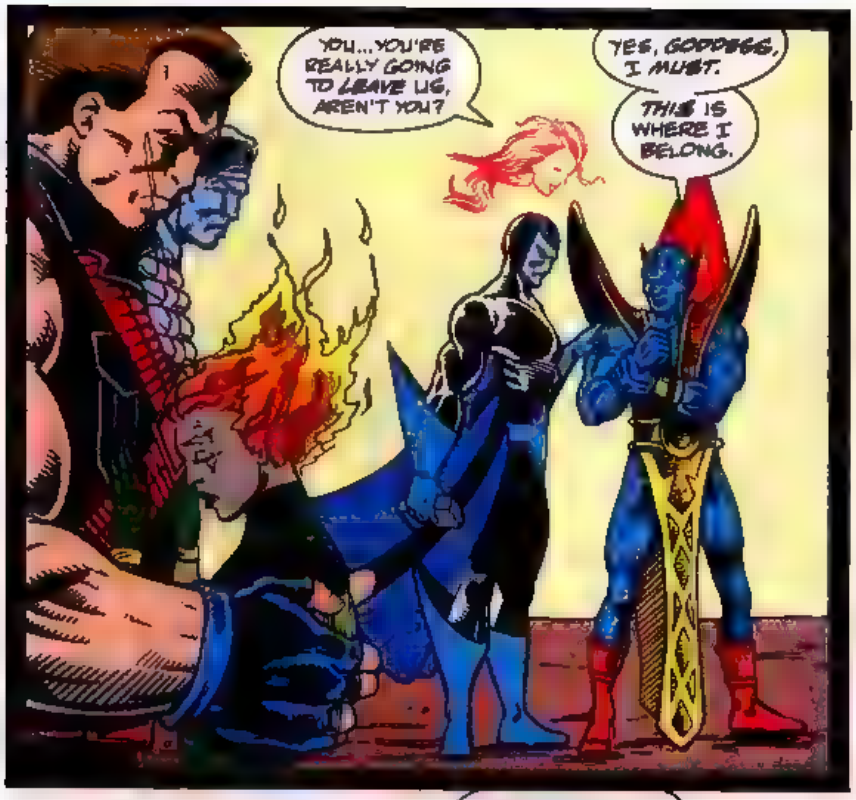

IT IS RIGHT HERE. AS YOU REQUESTED.
GOOD!

GET INSIDE THE CAVE!
KRAKATHOOM!
Y DON'T HAVTA TELL ME TWICE!


HMMM, THIS CAVE IS LACED WITH TRILLITE. WE COULDN'T CONTACT MARTY IF WE WANTED TO-- THIS STUFF BLOCKS RADIO WAVES!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, CHUNKY. FIRELORD SAID HE'D GET IN TOUCH WITH HIM PERSONALLY.
YES, BUT WHAT IF HE NEEDS TO GET A HOLD OF US?
NOW WHY IN THE WORLD WOULD HE NEED TO DO THAT?!
HEY, NIK, C'MON UP HERE! THIS IS GREAT!
TAL'S RIGHT CHARLIE. MARTY'S ON MAIN FRAME'S WORLD. WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG THERE?*
*OBVIOUSLY, NIKKI DIDN'T READ THE LEAD STORY IN THIS ANNUAL! -CLUE-'EM-IN-CRAIG
TALON, COME DOWN FROM THERE!
NO WAY, MAN. I HAVEN'T HAD THIS MUCH FUN SINCE I EXPLORED THE RUINS UNDER--
COME THIS WAY, VANCE, AND LET ME SHOW YOU


WELCOME TO THE HOME OF THE MIKAAHE, THE CAVE DWELLERS.
IMPRESSIVE.
DID THEY HIDE IN HERE WHEN THE BADOON ATTACKED, YONDU?
YES, AND HERE THEY REMAINED UNDETECTED ALL THOSE YEARS THANKS TO THE MINERAL YOU CALL TRILLITE, AND WE CALL..
...YAKA!

ONE THING STILL BOTHERS ME, YONDU. IF THESE PEOPLE WERE HERE ALL THIS TIME, WHY COULDN'T YOU SENSE THEM?
YOU SAID ONCE THAT YOU'D KNOW IF A CENTAURIAN WERE STILL ALIVE *...
...AND, WE EVEN PAID A VISIT TO THIS PLANET A FEW YEARS AGO **
I DO NOT INTEND TO INSULT, VANCE...
..BUT, MY TIME AMONG YOU HUMANS MUST HAVE DULLED MY SENSES
* ISSUE #1.
WELL, I, FOR ONE, THINK IT'S WONDERFUL!
AND, HEY! IF THERE'S ONE TRIBE THEN, WHO KNOWS, THERE MAY BE MORE!
YES, THE THOUGHT HAD OCCURRED TO ME, NICHOLETTE
UM, I DON'T MEAN TO BE A PARTY POOPER OR ANYTHING, BUT WHY DID WE BRING A MATRIX SCANNER DOWN HERE?
I STAND AS MAGANTU TO THESE PEOPLE TALON.
I AM THEIR HOLY MAN, THE FIRST THEY HAVE KNOWN IN NEARLY A GENERATION!
AS SUCH, THEY ACCEPT ME, EVEN THOUGH I AM OF A DIFFERENT KALA, OR TRIBE...
...BUT, THIS BIONIC "WEAPON", THIS THEY WILL NOT ACCEPT.
I HAVE ASKED MY FELLOW GUARDIANS TO USE THE TECHNOLOGY YOU SO PRIZE...
...TO MAKE MY BODY WHOLE, ONCE MORE...
...EVEN AS THESE PEOPLE HAVE MADE WHOLE MY SOUL!


YOU...YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO LEAVE US, AREN'T YOU?
YES, GODDESS, I MUST.
THIS IS WHERE I BELONG.

NO LONGER AM I AN ORPHAN. NOW I AM A PART OF A GREATER WHOLE!
MY FIRST TACK IS TO MAKE A TREATY WITH OUR NEW MATER-DWELLING NEIGHBORS, THE ALPHANS.
SEE GUARDIANS
-CRAIGSTER

MAY I TALK WITH YOU ALONE FOR A MINUTE, YONDU?
CERTAINLY, VANCE.
YOU OTHERS TRY TO MINGLE WITH THE NATIVES. REASSURE THEM THAT NOT ALL ALIENS ARE KILLERS LIKE THE BADOON.

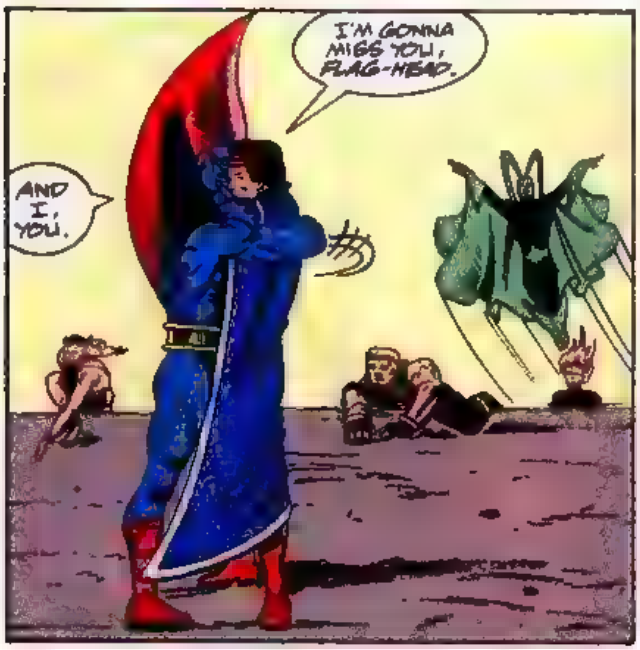
UH, HOW DO YOU MINGLE WITH PEOPLE THAT DON'T SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE?
OH, I DUNNO. TALON DOESN'T SEEM TO BE HAVING A PROBLEM WITH IT!
NOW NOW, LADIES, PLEASE! ONE AT A TIME!

WE'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT TOGETHER YOU AND I, HAVEN'T WE, YONDU?
YES, VANCE. MANY YEARS.
DO YOU REMEMBER HOW YOU USED TO TREAT ME?

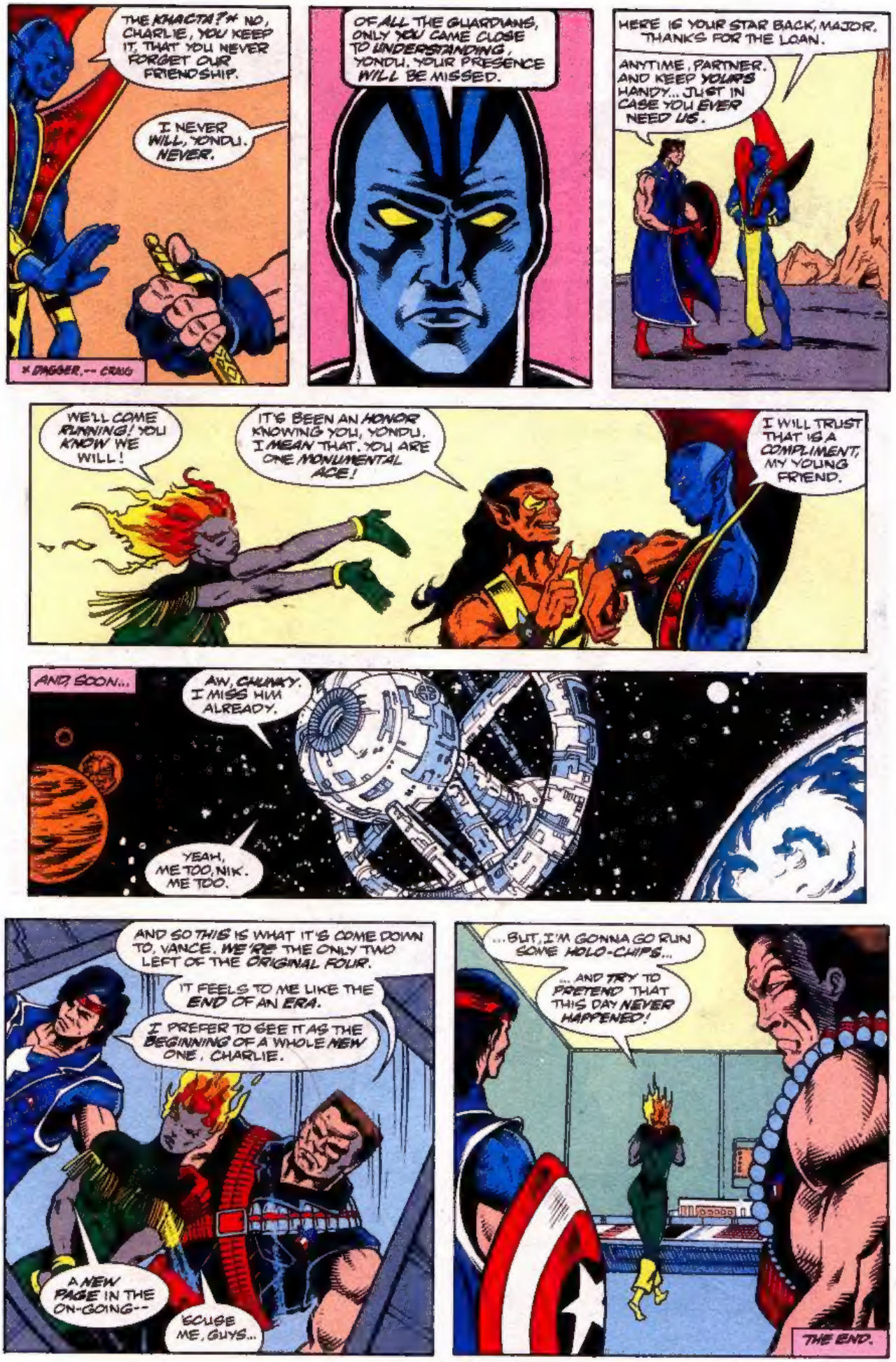
I'M ASHAMED TO SAY THAT I DO.
I THOUGHT YOU A SAVAGE...AN INFERIOR.
MY LORD, I WAS SO... SMUG. HOW DID YOU STAND ME?
I FELT PITY FOR YOU...
YOU WERE SO UNCENTERED

YEAH, I GUESS I WAS AT THAT.
I USED TO THINK THAT YOU WERE ONE OF THE STUPIDEST PEOPLE EVER BORN.
CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE MY BIGOTRY?

THERE IS NOTHING TO FORGIVE.
YES, THERE IS. I TREATED YOU LIKE DIRT. CONSIDERED YOU BENEATH ME. I. I WAS WRONG.
PLEASE, FORGIVE ME.
YOU ARE FORGIVEN.
I SHALL ALWAYS CALL YOU FRIEND, VANCE ASTRO.


I'M GONNA MISS YOU, FLAG-HEAD.
AND I, YOU.

THE STORM IS OVER
NOW HOW COULD YOU KNOW--OH, RIGHT. ONE WITH THE WORLD AND ALL OF THAT.
HERE, YOU. I THINK YOU OUGHT TO HAVE THIS BACK.


THE KHACTA?* NO, CHARLIE, YOU KEEP IT, THAT YOU NEVER FORGET OUR FRIENDSHIP.
I NEVER WILL, YONDU. NEVER.
*DAGGER,-- CRAIG
OF ALL THE GUARDIANS, ONLY YOU CAME CLOSE TO UNDERSTANDING, YONDU. YOUR PRESENCE WILL BE MISSED.
HERE IS YOUR STAR BACK, MAJOR. THANKS FOR THE LOAN.
ANYTIME, PARTNER. AND KEEP YOURS HANDY... JUST IN CASE YOU EVER NEED US.
WE'LL COME RUNNING! YOU KNOW WE WILL!
IT'S BEEN AN HONOR KNOWING YOU, YONDU. I MEAN THAT. YOU ARE ONE MONUMENTAL ACE!
I WILL TRUST THAT IS A COMPLIMENT, MY YOUNG FRIEND.
AND SOON...
AW, CHUNKY. I MISS HIM ALREADY.
YEAH, ME TOO, NIK. ME TOO.
AND SO THIS IS WHAT IT'S COME DOWN TO, VANCE. WE'RE THE ONLY TWO LEFT OF THE ORIGINAL FOUR.
IT FEELS TO ME LIKE THE END OF AN ERA.
I PREFER TO SEE IT AS THE BEGINNING OF A WHOLE NEW ONE, CHARLIE.
A NEW PAGE IN THE ON-GOING--
ECUSE ME, GUYS...
...BUT, I'M GONNA GO RUN SOME HOLO-CHIPS...
... AND TRY TO PRETEND THAT THIS DAY NEVER HAPPENED!
THE END.

HEY, TALON, WHY THE LONG FACE?
THE MAJOR TOLD ME TO BRUSH UP ON THE GUARDIANS' ROGUE'S GALLERY!
THAT'S NOT AN ENTIRELY BAD IDEA, Y'KNOW.
YEAH, IT'S JUST THAT VIEWIN' POCU-CHIPS IS NOT MY IDEA OF A GOOD TIME!
WELL, HOW ABOUT IF I BREAK IT DOWN FOR YOU? WE CAN CALL IT THE--
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY
TOP TEN THUGS!
STORY AND PENCILS BY JIM VALENTINO
INKED BY MICHAEL BAIR
LETTERED BY KEN LOPEZ
COLORED BY EVELYN STEIN
"WELL, IF WE START WITH THE LEAST OF THEM, I'D PERSONALLY NOMINATE OGORD AND THE REAVERS OF ARCTURUS FOR THE NUMBER TEN SPOT!"
"NO, 'FRAID NOT. THE ONLY REASON THEY EVEN MAKE THE LIST IS BECAUSE OGORD MURDERED ALETA'S AND STARHAWK'S CHILDREN--
"THE REAVERS?! YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!"
"--HIS OWN GRANDCHILDREN!"
"NICE GUY. OH, WAIT A MINUTE! I RECOGNIZE THESE LOSERS--THE MINIONS OF MENACE, RIGHT?"
MR. TEJU.
TORK.
GROTT.
DUMOG.
BRAHL.
RIGHT. THOUGH I HEARD THEY CHANGED THEIR NAME TO THE INTIMIDATORS, IF YOU CAN BELIEVE THAT!
EITHER WAY, THEY WERE NEVER ANY SERIOUS TROUBLE!
"NOT SO THE NEXT GROUP ON OUR LIST--RANCOR'S LIEUTENANTS!
SIDE-STEP.
BLOCKADE.
MIND-SCAN.
SHADDO.
BAT-WING.
"THESE GUYS ARE BOTH POWERFUL AND DEADLY, AS YOU RECENTLY FOUND OUT FOR YOURSELF!

"AND, EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE HELPED US BEFORE, I'D PUT FORCE AS NUMBER SEVEN ON OUR LIST.
BROADSIDE.
SCANNER.
INTER-FACE.
TACHYON.
EIGHTYFIVE.
PHOTON.
"I BELIEVE THAT THE BRAINS AND RAW POWER IN THIS TEAM MAKES THEM THE MOST DANGEROUS OF THE THREE GROUPS!
"NEXT, I'D HAVE TO CHOOSE MALEVOLENCE. OF ALL OF THESE GUYS, SHE'S THE ONE THAT REALLY SCARES ME!
"WE LEFT HER IN CHARGE OF THE PROTEGE, AND I, FOR ONE, BELIEVE THAT WE'LL LIVE TO REGRET THAT BIG TIME!
"IT'S MORE OR LESS A TIE BETWEEN HER AND OUR FIFTH SEAT BAD GUY, RANCOR! THE FORMER RULER OF KAVEN IS VICIOUSNESS PERSONIFIED!"
"YEAH, I DON'T THINK I'LL SOON FORGET HER, NIKKI."
"I GUESS I'D HAVE TO PUT OVERKILL IN THE FOURTH SLOT. NOT JUST BECAUSE HE PERSONALLY FOUGHT THE GUARDIANS TO A STANDSTILL...
"... BUT, ALSO, BECAUSE HE'S JUST ONE OF A WHOLE RACE OF EQUALLY VILE ALIENS CALLED THE STARK!"

"NUMBER THREE ON THE LIST WOULD HAVE TO BE THE PROTEGE!
"THOUGH ONLY A CHILD, HE IS THE DEITY OF A GALAXY-WIDE CHURCH!
"HE MAY ALSO BE THE MOST POWERFUL BEING IN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE, WITH HIS ABILITY TO MIMIC ANY SUPER-POWER HE SEES!
"BUT, HE'S NOT REALLY EVIL... JUST A LITTLE SPOILED!
"NEXT WOULD BE KORVAC! EITHER AS THE MAN-MACHINE WE FIRST MET...
"...OR, THE GODLIKE MICHAEL THE ENEMY THAT HE BECAME...
"...OR THAT WEIRD AMALGAMATION MARTY'S NEW GROUP JUST FOUGHT!
"I BELIEVE THAT HE'S THE CLOSEST THING WE HAVE TO AN ARCH-VILLAIN!
"BUT, WORST OF ALL, THE NUMERO UNO BAD DUDES ON THE LIST ARE THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE BADOON!
"THAT EVIL EMPIRE NOT ONLY COMMITTED GENOCIDE ON ALL OF OUR HOME WORLDS...
"...BUT THEIR INVASION OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM WAS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FOUNDING OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY!"
REALLY? Y'KNOW, THEY PRETTY MUCH STAYED AWAY FROM THE MOON.
CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED? I'VE NEVER HEARD THE GUARDIANS' "SECRET ORIGIN" BEFORE!
SURE, I WASN'T THERE, BUT...
...I THINK WE'VE GOT A DOCU-CHIP RIGHT HERE...
NIKKI TELLS TALON "THE (SECRET) ORIGIN OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY!" IN ISSUE #26! JOIN US THERE!!